

# HORIZON



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# HORIZON

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## CONTENTS

VOL. 7. No. 3 — WINTER 1947

Unless otherwise identified, the reproductions of early books, manuscripts and objects of art which appear in this magazine are from the originals in the collection of the Philosophical Research Society. A list of the publications of the society will be mailed upon request.

### HORIZON LINES (*Editorial*)

CONFUCIAN ETHICS FOR MODERNS..... 1

JESUS AND THE ESSENES ..... 12

INTERPRETING FAIRY STORIES..... 22

### EX LIBRIS P. R. S.

THE PENITENTES AND THE FOLK ART OF  
NEW MEXICO..... 32

### CURIOUSER & CURIOUSER

*The Kraken*..... 45

*The White Lady of the Hohenzollerns*..... 47

*The Story of the Newspaper*..... 48

### IN REPLY

*Question Concerning Karma*..... 50

PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC..... 56

### LIBRARY NOTES—*Music*

By A. J. Howie..... 74

THE SPRING ISSUE OF HORIZON WILL INCLUDE:

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE INDIFFERENT—*A study in Practical Ethics.*

THE MAYA EMPIRE—*With Special Reference to the Work of Augustus Le Plongeon.*

THE JAPANESE CREATION MYTHS—*An Introduction to Shintoism.*

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# HORIZON

Journal of the  
Philosophical Research Society

WINTER  
1947



ISSUED  
QUARTERLY  
VOLUME 7 No. 3

HORIZON  
LINES

AN EDITORIAL  
BY MANLY PALMER HALL



## Confucian Ethics for Moderns

CONFUCIAN ethics usually conjures up in the mind a scroll-like picture of two Chinese intellectuals, their hands folded over their ample fronts, bowing ceremoniously to each other while separated by a respectful distance. It would be difficult to imagine two American motorists battling for an intersection, getting out of their cars and each beseeching the other to go first. We would be more inclined to assume that such a procedure might be accountable for the fact that China—individually and collectively—has had considerable difficulty getting anywhere.

If the Chinese home appears to be burdened with decorum, the American home certainly is a monument to the glory of uninhibited action without consideration of consequences. Perchance Asia could use a little more freedom, and America a little more restraint.

We are inclined to think of ethics as a code of integrity imposed upon us by a legislative body of Cambridge dons. We must make some show of ethical procedure, not because of natural inclinations but in order to preserve an appearance of

respectability. We shall never know much about essential ethics until we examine more thoroughly the formulas of successful living.

It is never fair to assume that nations or races live well or badly. All collectives exhibit a wide range of conduct patterns. All Hindus are not Yogis; all Chinese are not poets and scholars, and all Persians are not rug merchants. When we seek in far places for practical suggestions or useful comparisons we do not measure the worst in others by the best in ourselves, or vice versa.

To the average Asiatic, America is populated entirely by millionaires, and all millionaires are rich barbarians remarkable for their bad manners and worse tastes. Conversely, these wealthy barbarians look upon Asiatics as a vast, unbathed collective in desperate need of efficiency in general and sanitation in particular. Each group then retires to the solitude of itself and gives thanks to eternal Providence that it does not resemble the other.

Ways of life are paths of opportunity, but opportunity does not fulfill itself without a certain amount of effort. The



Grecians were not especially successful as a group, but their cultural pattern resulted in the emergence of such men as Plato, Aristotle, and Euclid. The city where Homer lived cannot be forgotten, although most of its inhabitants were of no consequence. Pythagoras was not great because he was a Greek, but Greece is great because of Pythagoras.

It is foolish to reject the contributions of Buddha because his own people could not live up to them. It is equally unreasonable to question the essential values of the teachings of Confucius or Lao-tse because these two men did not understand each other and because not many have understood either of them. Asia is vitally important to us if one Hindu scholar, one Brahman sage, one Sufi mystic, or one old Chinese intellectual knows something that we need to know. Incidentally, we may as well accustom ourselves to the idea that there are a great many things that we need to know.

As youth, though strong in purpose, cannot have the experience of age, so young nations are always deficient in those virtues and perspectives which only maturity can bestow. Older cultural systems should not be rejected or ignored merely because we like to regard ourselves as modern. The ten-year-old boy is more modern than his father, but it does not follow that he is more sufficient. Father is still useful in an emergency.

Whether they be practiced or not, ethical standards are indispensable to any social system. If the local standard of ethics is the best available, apply it; if not, seek something better. There can be no sufficient standard unless it arises from a broad and deep idealism and an honest weighing of values. We cannot be ignorant and ethical anymore than we can be wise and unethical. However, we can be learned without being wise or ethical, as is rather obvious.

Confucius defined a superior man as one whose internal convictions made it impossible for him to perform an unworthy action. There is a saying in India that a man is not a rajah because he has many elephants. In the West we can substitute yachts for elephants, but the principle is unchanged. If aristocracy

were measured by the Confucian yardstick there might be quite a social upheaval.

When men build great cities they must remember that ethics is the cement which holds the stones together. In flourishing times a high standard of ethics is a nuisance, but when things go wrong it is in considerable demand. A man without ethics is a wild beast loosed upon his world.

It is a little difficult for us to imagine that twenty-five hundred years ago, on the other side of the earth, a quiet old gentleman devoted his life to the formulation of an ethical code just as important to the happiness and security of humanity as the legal codes of Hammurabi or Justinian. Confucius, or more correctly the philosopher Kung, can no longer be regarded as a Chinese by nationality or a Mongolian by race. He descends to us as a citizen of the world whose ideas are useful wherever and whenever they are applicable. We may be amused by some of his manners, and chuckle a little when we learn that he slept in a woolen night-shirt that covered his feet. We may feel him addicted to superstition and bound by innumerable outworn conventions, but by any estimation he was one of the greatest ethical thinkers of all time.

He decided for one thing that as long as men must live it might be a good thing for them to live well. There is no reason that even a small detail like living should be badly managed. We say a small detail, because there are things more important than life, to which we may sacrifice it instantly, or devote it over a long period of years. First there is honor, without which life fails utterly. There is beauty, love, service, friendship—these are the great, important things. If we have all else and not these, life availeth nothing. Then there is art, religion, literature, poetry, music, and philosophy. Man is not different because he lives and can animate his members. He is a man because he can choose to live well and practice the proprieties. Confucius made much of the proprieties; we can call them the gentilities—those things that transform a man into a gentleman, or a woman into a lady.





CONFUCIUS

The proprieties are the code of conduct which the individual imposes upon himself because he cannot function happily unless he lives up to his own convictions. For their expression the proprieties require leisure, and leisure in turn is the absolute prerequisite to a civilized existence. There is no place for haste in the consciousness of the superior man. Leisure must not be confused with indolence. It is not an escape from labor or responsibility. Probably it can be defined as a release from tension. Leisure moderates conduct. Things done hurriedly or by impulse lack the perfection which only reflection can bestow. Man must have time to think, not time to be thoughtless. The most difficult thing in the world to administer effectively is leisure. When we work we are subject to the laws governing our tasks, but in leisure we must govern ourselves. When we work we may work for profit, or economic security, or fame, or high office, but in leisure we work only to be satisfied.

Haste is the certain proof of adolescence. Men who hurry get little done. Nations that hurry hasten their own ends. As one Chinese scholar observed: "All

journeys lead to the grave; why hurry?" Much haste is but a gesture of escape. We are not hastening toward anything, merely away from ourselves. How destitute we must be when we cannot endure our own company. Nothing in nature takes a useless step but man.

Haste arises not from a lack of time but from a lack of self-control. A life that is so filled with projects that all of them must be hurried requires simplification. There must be discrimination, a wise selection of interests and activities, to the end of the preservation of the consciousness of leisure. Without leisure we must live upon the surface of things, hastening to and fro without knowing true depths of purpose. Leisure brings penetration. It permits completeness of both effort and appreciation. We must also remember that appreciation is not only valuable to ourselves but a constant inspiration to others.

The human capacity for greatness requires appreciation for the full expression of itself. Arts flourish, philosophies enlarge, trades and crafts gain dignity and significance when they are appreciated. It is therefore the duty of the superior



man to set a high standard of appreciation and in this way elevate the cultural level of his time.

Too many of us believe that there is more honor in large projects than in small works. We go in for quantity rather than for quality, confident that in this way we shall gain respect. But the human capacities are not suitable to the requirements of grandeur. It is wiser to do small things well than large things poorly. Vast enterprises are small things heaped together. As Michelangelo so wisely observed: "Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle." The failure of the large ambitions dominating Western minds is due, in part at least, to our indifference to the dignity of detail.

To many of the Chinese the art of living is more important than anything we can do while alive. The successful merchant might have a fortune buried in his basement, but this is not the real reason why he is a merchant. He buys and sells because merchantry satisfies certain of his instincts and inclinations. Wealth is an excuse, not the reason, for no man should be content to accumulate fortunes which he must leave behind. We sometimes wonder why persons of great wealth continue to hoard further gains when they cannot hope to live long enough to spend what they already have.

Essential culture is to the intelligentsia what buying and selling is to the merchant. Each is doing that which he most wishes to do. Confucius was not an advocate of the idle rich, nor did he advance luxury-loving aristocrats dabbling in the arts as examples of leisure. This refined state comes not from what we have but from what we are. Leisure is liberation from the pressures of circumstance. It is the courage to be one's self and to live well regardless of external rewards or penalties. The sage can have more leisure sitting under a plum tree than the prince can ever find in his palace. The prince must devote most of his attention to taking care of that retinue of underlings which is theoretically but not factually relieving him of his own duties. "No man is free who has a servant," says an old proverb.

The superior man is naturally inclined to simplicity of living; first because it protects his leisure, and second because it preserves him from such acquaintances as are more interested in his possessions or estate than in himself. At first, simplicity may require an effort of the will, but in a little time its rewards convince the mind. A cluttered life like a cluttered picture is bad art.

It is likely that Confucius would have something rather pertinent to say if he were born again in modern America. No one would pay much attention to him, but he would speak his piece and then retire into the gardens of his own leisure. If he did snoop about in an effort to understand causes of the prevailing chaos he would quite naturally turn his attention first to the home life of our middle-class families. It would be upon this observation that he would base his judgments of the future.

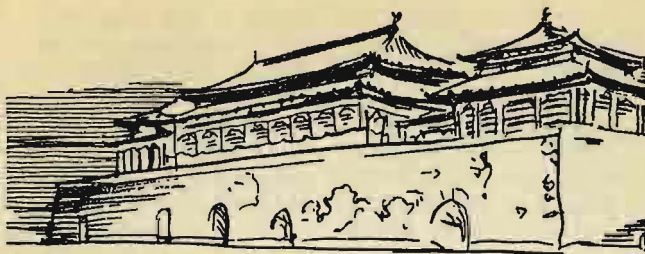
Confucius taught that the strength of a nation was derived from the integrity of its homes. When the home fails the nation fails, and the historian needs only to fill in the details. It is the home and not the church, the school, or the state which is responsible for the foundations of human character. There are no advantages that wealth can bring to a house that can compensate in any measure if that house is not a home.

The home is the natural abode of the superior family. It is also the shrine of leisure, and the graces natural to distinguished living. The word distinguished does not here signify opulent, but implies a gracious integrity. Thoughtfulness is the keynote of the superior home.

Old Confucius would be astonished beyond words to see the heir apparent of the American home being thrashed by an irate parent. Such highly civilized procedure was not commonly practiced by the old pagan Chinese. They were strong advocates of the ounce of prevention rather than the pound of cure.

Many ancient Asiatic families have flourished for twenty generations producing honorable and law-abiding sons and daughters without having ever raised hand or voice against an offspring. Of course, they were part of a social system





all of which was maintained in the same way. The good child was not contaminated by bad acquaintances, nor exposed to pernicious examples in the conduct of its elders. This makes the rule difficult to apply in our way of life, but a partial application will help some in most cases.

Oriental children are taught from the cradle that they will be judged by their conduct. Discourtesy is not only a reflection upon themselves, but upon their families, their religion, their nation, and their entire way of life. Not for a moment does this mean that the Oriental home is composed of little Lord and Lady Fauntleroy's. I, myself, have seen a titled gentleman, member of the imperial Cabinet, down on his knees riding his children piggy-back in his garden; nor did the neighbors gather at the spectacle. In Parliament he was a monument of decorum, but in his home he was a father.

From pole to pole children are children, which is a perfectly proper state of things, but there is no reason why they cannot grow up with natural graces and a proper sense of values. The key to the whole situation is example. The child naturally wants to excel; he wants to share as much as possible in the activities of the adults. He recognizes instinctively that his immaturity imposes restrictions, and he wants to overcome these as quickly as possible.

The instinctive love of beauty which we find so often in the Eastern personality exercises considerable influence. The rich and poor alike make a consistent effort to surround themselves with an environment of artistry. Those whose means do not permit the accumulation of rare paintings or porcelain achieve their satisfaction with flowers, plants, and such materials as are available. This sensitivity to fineness, whether it be tutored or

untutored, produces beneficial results. Ingenuity is directed and efforts inclined toward soul satisfaction. This lingers on in later years, and while it may not always dominate it exerts a gentle but insistent pressure.

In the Oriental home there is always time. The members work together, live together, and share both their pains and joys without affectation. Children are important. Their upbringing is an honorable and significant project. The Eastern home is often more closely bound together by its economic insecurity. There is always work to be done, and if the child is too young to help he can at least learn not to hinder. From the beginning he expects to give and not to receive. He appreciates the sacrifices that must be made in his behalf, and seldom imposes upon his elders.

The subtle psychology beneath this is that he has always been treated as a person. His own small circle of values is seldom violated by the older members of the family. His sensibilities are considered; he is requested to help and not ordered to help, therefore, he is in the position to make a gracious gesture of his own. Such gestures are in themselves pleasant and comforting, and because they are enjoyable there is no conflict.

Confucius would always have parents say please when requesting something of a child. This is the surest way of making the child say please when the situation is reversed. Good manners become habits, and those we develop in youth remain with us in our gray hairs.

If for any reason it appears necessary to correct a child or give information on some subject where knowledge is evidently deficient this must be handled discreetly, not just for the sake of the child, but because the parent has no desire to



transgress the proprieties. Nagging parents raise irritable, ill-tempered children. The Asiatic father would never think of correcting his son in the presence of any other member of the family. This is an humiliation to which no human being should be subjected. The child to defend his own honor must deny the charge or invent some falsehood to justify his actions. Even in private, the parent will be courteous, sympathetic, and under no conditions, even for an instant, irritable. This is a great test when confronted with a tempestuous juvenile, but not so difficult when the child has never seen a tempest or been induced to demonstrate one.

In the proper seclusion of a quiet study or a bamboo grove the information is transferred. Usually the child requires only a hint; it is seldom necessary to mention any sordid details. A prince of the blood changed the whole habit of his living when his father, over a cup of tea, looked slightly worried, and murmured softly: "I am concerned."

It would take more than concern in three words to cure the young delinquent of today. We cannot undo the mistakes of centuries in one generation, but unless we wish these mistakes to continue and gain momentum, we must integrate some plan of procedure that points toward solution.

The beginning of a general reform is always the reformation of ourselves. It is useless going around bending twigs and hoping for the best. Countless factors contribute to the unfortunate crisis which bewilders the modern parent. Obviously the child, who has but recently arrived, is not personally responsible for the present state of his world through any present action of his own. He is not to blame for the motion pictures, radios, penny-dreadfuls, and the gangster psychosis in the midst of which he is attempting to build a satisfactory character. He is as much the victim of circumstances as the adults who are always longing for a change of administration.

Confucius would tell us that the only way to have healthy children is to bring them into a healthy world. Some will survive the chaos with a minimum of injury, but all will be damaged to some

degree. Committees for this, leagues for that, and commissions for something else will be markedly ineffectual as long as the members of the committees, leagues, and commissions lack internal graces. It is very difficult for the uneducated to educate, and until one puts his own house in order it can never be a home.

The ethical equation in life requires the gradual development of a broad sense of values, and the application of ethical principles to the everyday problems with which the average person is surrounded. The correction must begin with the re-education of the adult. Naturally, it would be entirely impractical for us to attempt to assume classical Chinese manners any more than it would be proper or desirable for us to attempt to live in a classical Chinese house. We must encourage the development of our own aesthetic instincts, but any interior decorator will tell you that a fine example of Oriental artistry adds distinction and a note of good taste to the most modern Western home. In the same way we will find that certain phases of Eastern ethics will add refinement, beauty, and integrity to contemporary Occidental character.

We cannot solve any problem by directing our attention exclusively to one particular aspect of a wide-spread confusion. We cannot improve the home without raising the level of our commercial procedures and our concepts of religion, science, philosophy, industry, and economics. The interpretation of these factors is far too intimate to permit the correction of one without the solution of the others. It is like an attempt to stamp out crime by punishing a criminal. Each delinquent is a particular suspended from a general sphere of causes. There can be no permanent correction of effects apart from the solution of their causes.

As long as a civilization bestows its greater blessings such as they are upon those who live by an intensely competitive concept of ethics, it is inevitable that we shall endure the unhappy consequences of such a concept. The prevailing conceit distributed through all the levels of our society gives rise to countless particular manifestations consistent with itself, but inconsistent with the happiness



and security of our race. The conditions under which we live must always bear witness to the concepts by which we live.

Experience has taught Eastern nations many lessons which we have not yet learned. China with a population of four hundred million and India with a population of three hundred million have been confronted with a number of vital psychological as well as physical dilemmas. The populations of Western nations are also increasing. Science has discovered many ways of cutting down the rate of infant mortality, and lengthening the life span of the average citizen. It is well within possibility that in a century or two the population of the United States could reach two hundred or two hundred and fifty million. It is impossible for such masses of human beings to function successfully by the same code of rugged individualism as was practical when scattered pioneers were reclaiming a wilderness.

To meet the challenge of increasing populations, the existing world powers must educate their peoples along lines of co-operation and moderation. New standards of values must be set up; new ways in which human beings may fulfill their instincts for distinction must be devised. If we do not solve this riddle ourselves, a solution possibly uncomfortable in the extreme will be forced upon us by the natural laws of our world.

A disastrous war in no way solves the confusion due to lack of sufficient ethics. For thousands of years Asia was afflicted with corrupt rulers, ineffective laws, Nicene and inter-Nicene strife, plagues, earthquakes, famines, and floods, but the populations have relentlessly increased. There can be no solution but solution. Either the human family must meet the challenge of its own requirements or continue to be exhausted by its own delinquencies.

After all, the thing that all men seek is happiness, but unfortunately this world has no conclusive definition. To most mortals the word means only the fulfillment of their own desires, and they have never clarified, rationalized, or disciplined these desires. Because we do not really know what we want we remain unhappy

even if we accomplish our desires.

The civilization of our world must result from the civilization of the individual. Any group of civilized persons constitutes a civilized community. It may be well, therefore, to pause and consider the implications of the term civilized. Naturally the word means to be civil; that is primarily, to be capable of mingling compatibly with others of our kind and to unite in the practice of civic virtues. No individual who lacks the instinct to co-operate can be civilized regardless of his intellectual acquirements. A civilized nation is one in which the citizens voluntarily, because of discernment and discretion, live together and work together harmoniously and in any and every common emergency consider the public good before their own. Any other way of life is savage or barbaric, regardless of its accomplishments in economics, industry, science, or politics.

As it is perfectly possible for a man, himself unenlightened, to exist as a barbarian in a civilized community, it is also possible for another man, internally cultured, to live as a civilized human being in a savage or barbaric community. The individual remains the creator, preserver, or destroyer of himself and his way of life.

The Chinese concept of the superior man finds its Western, modern equivalent in the American and European concept of the civilized man. We have long regarded the materially successful man as the outstanding example of culture. While this interpretation remains, the average citizen is without adequate incentive for the improvement of his own character. He copies the successful as he has been taught to understand success, and as a reward he shares in their miseries.

Western civilization is gradually shifting from a physical to a psychological foundation. This is merely a phase in the inevitable process of growth. The new psychological concept brings with it new convictions about success and failure, security and insecurity, sufficiency and insufficiency. Psychosomatics has revealed the importance of mental health in a physical world. Mental health implies



much more than the absence of mental disease. A mind to be healthy must be properly nourished and must find reasonable outlets for its normal activities. As the mind matures, it must reject the false uses to which its energies have been applied. The thinker outgrows the schemer in himself, and the planner becomes disgusted with his own plots. All real growth is toward ethics, and as we know more we are compelled by our own knowledge to function on a higher level of conduct.

The mentally mature person venerates beauty, respects innate superiority, cultivates simple distinction of deportment, and supports these qualities in others. Qualities become more important than quantities of any kind. The superior man emerges without conflict and accepts without question a way of life agreeable to his instincts.

In this way the proprieties come into fashion, not because they are particularly cultivated, but because they are generally recognized. The civilizing graces emerge from within the personality; they are not attached from the outside. Proprieties which unfold in this way are not mislaid in a crisis nor do we have to guard them as an abstract form of chattel.

There is sufficient ethics in the subconscious of many Occidentals to deserve immediate attention. These nobler instincts should be given every possible encouragement and opportunity. No violent revolution or renovation need be contemplated. There are thousands of small ways possible to anyone who desires to find them by which soul power can be released into daily life. This is especially true of those who are already dedicated to self-improvement through religion, philosophy, and the arts. All that is required is a sincere desire to become a better and more useful person.

Confucius and his disciples have left a quantity of useful hints on how to be a superior man.

There is a motion in the world, an eternal rhythm. Havelock Ellis called this rhythm 'the dance of life'. Everywhere in the universe a divine energy is fulfilling itself patiently and beautifully. Every snow flake is a masterpiece of

mathematics and design. Every plant, flower, and tree is an integration about a gracious gesture. The tides of the sea and the tides in the affairs of men bear witness to infinite order and infinite rhythmic motions. It remained for man to syncopate the flow of his energies, jazz his ethics, jive his morals, and submit his nerves to the tender outpourings of a juke box. As a result, he threatens to become the most exhausted rather than the most exalted of the sublime creations.

Crusaders would abolish the juke box, but philosophers would correct the cause. Lives out of tune with themselves will find a certain amount of solace in alleged music that is out of tune with everything. Such matters are regulated by the law of supply and demand. It is stupid to assume that we can remedy anything with an axe.

It all points to the cultivation of leisure as already indicated. When we have attained an internal leisure we can move graciously with the rhythms of life and discord ceases within ourselves. Mature philosophies, rich treasures of art, priceless works of literature, and adequate standards of personal conduct are the by-products of enlightened leisure. The fruits of life must be given time to ripen. Even an opinion improves with age. Policies which are the result of sober consideration are less likely to require immediate reform, and laws properly matured come closer to being just.

This calls to mind a certain gentleman who prided himself on the quickness of his notions. No matter what the subject under discussion he was ready with a devastating generality. Of course most of his solemn pronouncements were absurd, and he battled for hours trying to defend publicly fancies that should have been censored privately.

The life of leisure permits the planning of action, energies conserved rather than wasted, and the program of the day unfolds within boundaries of law and order. Tasks are weighed, and those which are immediate given preference over those which are remote. In the end more is accomplished and there is practically no wear and tear. Thoughtfulness removes the imaginary hazards which



burden enterprises, decreases the tendency to worry, and preserves us from the tyranny of our own prejudices and preconceptions. The result is greater tranquility. One intense and nervous member of a household can upset the entire family. In the resulting confusion each person involved says and does things which he may regret in his leisure. If the leisure comes first, not so many regrets will come afterwards.

Many folk nurse a false notion that leisure reduces efficiency or is impossible in a rapidly moving social system. Nearly all successful people have learned that such a policy is unprofitable. They have established a proper tempo and maintain it in the face of every temptation to hurry. All projects have a natural motion within themselves; if this is discovered and maintained things go much better.

Leisure carries with it a sense of detachment; rest and relaxation can be planned, and fitted into the larger picture. Nothing is accomplished by waiting for a nervous breakdown before taking a vacation. We rest as frenziedly as we work and exhaust ourselves on programs of relaxation. Even in these confused times very few men or women collapse or die from overwork. It is not the labor but the inefficiency, confusion, and personality resistance which destroy. Fretting over a task is far more detrimental to the system than the work itself. The prevailing dissatisfaction about the things that need to be done is also exhausting. When we work for a paycheck, watch clocks, and grudge every hour, days are long, fellow employees constant sources of irritation, the employer a tyrant, and the job, itself, a tolerated evil. Of course, we come home from such a situation in a mood for violence. We blame the economic system, world politics, and the international bankers, but the fault, as usual, lies in ourselves. Of course there are exceptions but they are comparatively few.

When we have committed our entire personality to a gracious code of conduct we have greater control over irritating particulars. Usually we brace ourselves for a major crisis, but have little defense

against small sources of irritation. If the business man organizes his business by a concept of dignified rhythm his life outside of his office is correspondingly improved. If the housewife integrates her domestic responsibilities into a constructive pattern and accepts the dignity of details the atmosphere of the home is relieved of stress and tension. In this relaxed and normalized environment children have a better chance to grow and parents a larger opportunity to be people. The probabilities of family squabbles are reduced and natural compatibilities have a chance to manifest themselves.

To the Chinese conversation is an indication of culture or the lack thereof. With the Occidental talk is cheap and conversation a lost art. Only interesting people can have interesting things to say. I once knew a delightful lady who had made nearly twenty trips to Europe and should have been an inspired and inspiring conversationalist. Her one theme, however, when in polite society was the number, price and quality of the fifty handbags she had accumulated. When asked her impressions of Holland in tulip time, she replied that she paid twenty-five dollars for a beaded purse in Amsterdam.

Confucius was not the only one who observed the lack of artistic conversation in the average home. After two or three years of married life the husband and wife have told nearly all they know about everything to each other. Unless new sources are tapped the small talk grows so dull that even a bad motion picture is a distinct relief. The family can then return home and have a few animated moments post-morteming the film. A brilliant conversationalist is not necessarily one who has been everywhere and seen everything, rather it is a person who has observed, contemplated a little, and discovered the drama everywhere present in life and living. Life is an adventure in learning, and we are all interested in the genuine experiences of those about us, and especially those for whom we have a natural affection. We should study the rules of conversation as we would study the rules of any other art or science. A few may be born to be interesting, but



the majority must win their way by merit and effort. One of the basic rules of conversation, incidentally, is to know when to stop.

When a distinct effort is made to enrich a home, not by extravagances but by refinements, results obtained are valuable beyond price. Personal living becomes more secure, incentives are strengthened, and even material success more likely. We begin to discriminate, clinging to those values which ennoble and enrich. Dignity is natural and unaffected. Tendencies to carelessness are overcome and we cease to impose upon affection and respect.

There is no reason why a person should be careful of his manners in public and careless of them at home. While economic circumstances may make it seem advisable to save our best suit or dress for public appearances, it is a sad mistake to assume that privacy bestows the right of slovenliness. It is not necessary to be like the elder gentleman who, living alone and cooking his own meals, always put on a tuxedo before sitting down to dinner. Confucius would have held such a man in higher esteem, however, than the one who, left to his own devices for two weeks, left the pots, pans, and dishes unwashed until his wife came back from her vacation.

No matter how long folks live together they never can afford to be indifferent to the proprieties of the home. If good habits are allowed to disintegrate, and familiarity breeds indifference, troubles may be expected. Every human being has a right to be respected as a human being unless he forfeits that right by his own conduct. We have rights of domain, rights of privacy, rights of self-expression, rights of participation in collective problems, rights of management; if these are transgressed, those guilty of such transgressions are not superior persons. In our effort to be understood, we must not forget that we must understand others. Wise leadership is one thing, and a stupid effort to domain is another. We are not leaders because we bluster, but because we are capable of superior solution or have a clearer vision of a course to be followed.

The home is a miniature universe, a microcosm and a mirror of the world. To the degree that men and women can dignify their personal relationships they contribute to the improvement of all human society. The great, as well as the humble, must go home or return to a place which is a reasonable or unreasonable facsimile of a home. Men write good laws out of their own contentment, and if in positions of authority, can afflict nations with the consequences of personal unhappiness. When going home is indeed a journey toward integrity it can protect the character of young and old alike. The school child may be exposed to a variety of contaminating influences which would lure him away from nobility of thought or action, but if that child has in the back of its mind a realization that life can be beautiful, friendship honorable, marriage successful, and high ethical standards really workable in this world, he has a powerful defense against internal demoralization.

A smoothly operating home where the correct values are emphasized is the only possible source of constructive object lessons. It is not enough that the home be negatively satisfactory, and it helps but little to send a child to the neighbors while the parents quarrel. Every child learns at an early age the facts about the little world of family in which he lives. Neither the assumption of false virtues in his presence, nor good council contrary to conduct will keep little folk on the straight and narrow way.

But ethics go still deeper than the practice of virtues; it penetrates into the sphere of motives. A family should not behave itself for the sake of its children. This implies the heroic sacrifice of a bad disposition for a good cause. The adult member of the clan should live well because that is the proper way to live. While children are especially impressionable, grownups can be hurt, confused, and unhappy. We have no more right to fail the reasonable expectancies of adults than to damage the psyches of small boys and girls.

Much more could be said along the lines of Confucian ethics. We can at-



tempt to defend ourselves on the ground that even the Chinese for the most part could not live up to them. If no one in the world, and that would be an exaggeration, ever lived well, it is no reason why we should not live well. Our whole civilization is in danger of collapse for a need of ethics. Unless we are willing to drift toward oblivion with those who have refused the challenge of dignified

living, we must establish our own integrity and defend it with every legitimate means at our disposal. The two old gentlemen we described in the first paragraph bow ceremoniously from the middle and trust that their humble and well-intentioned words have given a little offense—just enough to stimulate the rich barbarians of the West to become superior persons.



### THE BUILDING CODE OF HAMMURABI

Forty-two hundred years ago, Hammurabi, King of Babylon, laid down a code of laws which included special mention of the responsibilities of the builders of private dwellings and public buildings. These include the following:

If a builder builds a house for a man and through neglect, incompetence, or the cheapening of the materials, the house collapses and this causes the death of the owner, the builder likewise shall be put to death.

If the son of the owner is killed, the son of the builder shall be put to death.

If the slave of the owner be killed, the builder must supply another slave of equal value.

If property is destroyed by the collapse of the house, it shall be restored by the builder, and the house rebuilt at the cost of the builder.

If due to the lack of the fulfillment of the requirements any defect shall appear in the construction, the builder must correct the defect at his own expense.

*From Engineering News-Record, June 5, 1930.*

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### VITAL FACTS DEPARTMENT

It has been estimated that forty-four thousand thunder storms occur daily on the surface of the earth.





## Jesus and the Essenes

A NUMBER of mystical, religious, and philosophical sects flourished in Syria about the time of the beginning of the Christian era. Among these must be included the Cabalists, the old Johannites, the Syrian Gnosis, the Samaritans, the Essenes, and the Assideans, who were referred to in I Macabees as "mighty men of Israel." While some of these groups were essentially Jewish in character others revealed strong foreign influences. Like most Near-Eastern nations whose culture developed along caravan routes, the Syrians produced a variety of poly-genetic cults, and these in turn influenced the early Christian communities.

After the Romans had made themselves masters of Palestine the Jewish sects were colored to a considerable degree by political considerations. The Romans naturally regarded this coloring as subversive and attempted to destroy all such organizations. As a result several societies, previously pursuing their programs publicly, went underground and became secret fraternities. In this way some sects vanished permanently and we have no further record of their activities. In all probability they did not survive as formal organizations. Others took on an appearance entirely different from their original form and descended as esoteric cults among the Jewish families scattered by the Diaspora.

Christian historians have realized that in order to understand the psychological overtones of the gospel stories of Jesus and his ministry it was necessary to restore, at least to a degree, the times and circumstances which resulted in this new religious dispensation. All effects in nature are suspended from adequate causes, and a religion is not a spontaneous gen-

eration. Fortunately, reasonably complete histories of the period are available, and it is possible to estimate with considerable accuracy the forces at work beneath the surface of Jewish society of that time.

The modern thinker is no longer content to accept the gospel stories without question or reflection. He is convinced that the life and ministry of Jesus have a natural explanation, so he asks several entirely reasonable questions, such as: Where was Jesus educated? Was he a member of one of the mystical communities of his time, and what was the actual substance of his teaching? These issues have been obscured by a general attitude of veneration and by the variety of interpretations of the later creeds of Christendom, but obscurity is not solution, and it is important to the integrity of man's spiritual convictions that he know the facts.

Unfortunately, there is no historical source of material on the life of Jesus outside the gospel and certain apocryphal writings. These accounts deal almost exclusively with the teachings of the Master and do not advance the cause of the critical historian. The total absence of dates and the contradictory nature of the references to historical persons and places only add to the general confusion. The accounts given in the four gospels supply no information about the life of Jesus between his twelfth and thirtieth years. Thus, over half of the period of his physical incarnation is a complete mystery. At this late time it is unlikely that documents bearing upon this wide gap will come to light, as nearly every possible source has been explored without success.



We should be cautious in accepting unproved accounts or reports belonging to a later period which attempt to bridge this biographical interval. Unless it can be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that such explanations are founded upon some solid ground of contemporary witnesses they must be heavily discounted. A number of fabrications have been circulated and plausible stories invented to sustain them, but they all collapse when subjected to careful and impartial research.

Several writers have advanced the hypothesis that Jesus was a member of the Essenian fraternity. In all fairness we must admit the plausibility of the idea, but we must also acknowledge that there is no actual proof that he belonged to this sect. There is some circumstantial evidence in favor of such an affiliation, but we must be honest and not encourage directional thinking which is semantically unsound. The most that we dare to say is that there is a good possibility, even a probability, that Jesus was an Essene. We base this probability not upon historical records but upon the life and teachings of the man himself. In order to justify the assumption that Jesus was a member of the Essene communion, it is necessary first to examine the sect; its origin, its teachings, and its rites. Here, again, we must proceed cautiously for the Essene order itself presents many difficulties. No complete record of its doctrines have descended to us, and we must depend upon the superficial observations of such an historian as Josephus. He devoted considerable space to the Essenes in his monumental *History of the Jews* and the *Wars of the Jews*, but he writes as an observer, not as a participator in their esoteric tradition.

Additional fragments relating to the Essenes are to be found in the writings of Philo Judaeus and Pliny the Elder. Of these two Philo may be regarded as the best equipped to estimate the philosophy of the Essenes, but he gives us only a few paragraphs. These are the only contemporary authorities of importance, and all subsequent writers have depended upon them in writing upon the subject.

Even the name of the sect is difficult to interpret. The word Essene does not indicate the name of the founder or any particular locality, nor does it give any clue to the origin of the fraternity. All efforts to define the word are speculative. We can take our choice of such definitions as: 'the holy ones,' 'the oracles,' 'the mysterious ones,' 'the elders,' 'the healers,' 'the pure ones,' 'the hermits,' or 'the silent ones.' Heckethorn, in *The Secret Societies of All Ages and Countries*, advances the ingenious theory that the Essenes took their name from the *essen* or breastplate worn by the Jewish high-priest in the tabernacle rites. He feels that the Essenes because of their mystical doctrine were opposed to the faith of the orthodox Jews, and were forced to take every possible precaution to escape persecution. The order was divided into four grades or degrees, and the advancement of the member was accomplished by a series of initiations. Even those who had received the third degree were not admitted into the secret assembly, nor did they receive the higher keys of the doctrine. Only such as were found entirely trustworthy after a long period of observation became aware of the true purpose for which the sect had been founded. Heckethorn writes: "The four degrees... were respectively called the 'Faithful,' the 'Illuminate,' the 'Initiated,' and the 'Perfect.' The Faithful received at their initiation a new or baptismal name, and this was engraved with a secret mark upon a white stone (probably alluded to in Rev. ii. 17, which, as we shall hereafter see, was not Christian in its origin), which he retained as a voucher of his membership. The usual sign was the cross, though other signs also were employed.

The Essene community at Engedi, near the Dead Sea, was in existence for several centuries before the beginning of the Christian era. Just how long no one seems to know, but the passing remark of Pliny that the sect had lasted for thousands of ages is certainly an exaggeration. It has been suggested that the Essene order was founded by the Greek philosopher, Pythagoras, during his residence in Palestine. Others hold that it was im-



ported from Asia or that it developed from the teachings of Zoroaster. These speculations are derived from an attempt to analyze the doctrine of the order, but the Essene initiates never revealed the esoteric parts of their philosophy to the profane so it is extremely difficult to estimate the true source of their traditions. They are believed to have held many of the beliefs associated with the Greek mystery schools, but their ascetic way of life binds them to Eastern religious disciplines. The school of Pythagoras was built upon an Oriental pattern as the result of the initiation of this great sage into the mysteries of the Brahmans at Elephanta and Ellora in Central India.

The exoteric life of the Essene community revealed a highly evolved socialized consciousness. The sect was divided into two groups, of which the highest was dedicated to absolute celibacy and rejected marriage and all human ties and relationships, except spiritual fellowship. The lower group was composed of householders who could marry and raise families. It is believed that the older members of this class after their children had grown up could take the final vows of continence and be advanced to membership in the higher group. Even those who married were expected and required to live in a state of the utmost purity and to view all human relationships as symbolical of spiritual mysteries. The lower group was therefore a kind of confraternity of laymen who were not ready to renounce all physical attachments, but were inclined to conform with certain parts of the Essene code.

Both groups lived according to a highly socialized and idealized communal concept. They renounced all worldly possessions, sharing their goods in common and holding nothing for themselves. In this they were similar to the Pythagoreans. It would seem that the Essenes originated among that class of the Jews which practiced agriculture and the various trades. They were a hardworking people who regarded the sweat of honest toil as the true water of baptism. Every able-bodied man was required to contribute a certain number of hours each day to some line of endeavor which

would increase the revenue of the community. Many were farmers, tilling arid and unfruitful land. Some were carpenters and builders, and most limited themselves to menial occupations. There is indication, however, that a few members of the sect were men of outstanding mental ability. Frequently these were appointed as teachers of the young, and during the Roman occupation the more important officials selected Essenes as tutors for their children. There is also record that some of the Essenes practiced divination by the stars, could interpret dreams, and prophesy future events.

It was against the code of the order that any of its members should engage in barter or exchange, nor could they work in any trade that took life or profited from the labors of others. They were excused from military duty by Roman law, and were pacifists even at the cost of their own lives. Whatever money they earned the Essenes deposited in a common treasury, and from this fund was purchased anything required by the members. They sat at one table and ate only the simplest foods. Even their clothing was allotted to them according to the needs of the seasons. They wore their garments as long as decency permitted, but kept them clean and mended. They had no fine clothes and wore no jewelry or other decorations.

Some of the lower grade, who were childless, adopted orphans or the children of relatives. These they raised and educated with the greatest care. All children dwelling in the community were supplied from the funds of the order. Those who were sick or injured were given constant and loving care and protected from all want to the end of their lives. The old were held in the highest esteem for it was remembered that they had worked faithfully as long as their strength permitted.

The celibate group was perpetuated either from the lower grade or by new members drawn to the society by the ideals which it taught. Many took refuge with the sect to escape the sorrows and misfortunes of the outer world. Among all races and nations there are some gentle and sensitive persons who



desire to retire from intense competitive living and seek refuge in monastic orders. This type cast their lot with the Essenian sect where they found not only physical asylum but a calm and kindly atmosphere and spiritual security.

The Essenes practiced mystical rites, held prayers before sunrise, and said grace before their meals. They believed in the corruptibility of the body and in the immortality of the soul. The soul was bound to the body as though imprisoned, but through disciplining the flesh and releasing the mind and heart from all worldliness the soul could be liberated and could ascend to the subtle air from which it came. Good souls came in the end to a happy habitation in a beautiful land beyond an ocean.

Philo mentions that in his time the sect numbered about four thousand. The Essenes kept no slaves and acknowledged no masters, believing that all men were created by God to be free and equal. They acknowledged no aristocracy except such advancement as came from spiritual growth, and those who had attained to a larger consciousness were the humblest among them. The sect was not disputatious, rejected logic, but was much addicted to ethics. They belonged to the mystical descent teaching that only those who lived the life of virtue could know the soul doctrine. They were bound by vows and obligations, and not even torture could force them to reveal their esoteric teachings. It was also a rule that under no condition must a member show pain or sorrow. They were very stoical, but at the same time believed that they should preserve a happy disposition and appearance. Disciplines were not burdens but privileges. A man should not grow toward God mournfully and despondently. That which he sought to obtain was the greatest good, and he should make the path of attainment a joyous experience.

Although the sect was regarded as heretical by some of the more conservative Jewish schools, the Essenes were widely regarded as persons of the highest character. Crime was unknown among them and they were models of uprightness. Little is known of the order after the 1st



century of the Christian era. Some authorities believe that the fraternity was absorbed into the early Christian communities, others consider it probable that it was perpetuated in the structure of later Jewish mystical movements.

This, then, was the mystical order to which Jesus may have belonged. Edouard Schure, in his *Jesus, the Last Great Initiate*, weaves a delightful, if not entirely scholarly, web of circumstances to sustain the probability of Jesus having been initiated into the Essenian mysteries. His reasoning is logical, but we should remember that the Essenes rejected logic. He sees Joseph the carpenter practicing a trade common to the order. Is it not likely that Joseph and Mary belonged to that degree of the order which permitted marriage for pure and spiritual motives? If Jesus had been raised in such a socialized environment it would explain the basic tenets of his teachings. He brought a simple message to the common man. He emphasized the brotherhood of humanity as they did. He wore the long hair and simple white robe which was the distinguishing dress of the Syrian mystical sects. He was recognized by John the Baptist as a holy person and a teacher. He revealed the mystical content of his message only to certain of his closest followers and taught the others by means of parables. His deportment was gentle and humble, and he spoke of the mysteries of God as one who was initiated.

All these parallels are beyond question, but no contemporary writer links the



name of Jesus with any of the religious sects of his day. Perhaps these records have been destroyed, but it is strange that none of the disciples should have mentioned a single word on this vital subject. We can only say that there are striking similarities between the original teachings of Jesus and the known tenets of the Essene cult.

No investigation of the early life of Jesus would be complete without an effort to fill in the long period of eighteen years in which there is no record of his activity. Recourse to the old Jewish writings offers a possible clue. The Talmud mentions a teacher, who more or less answers the description of Jesus, who traveled to Egypt in his youth and remained there many years, mastering the magical arts of the Egyptians. Here again we are in the presence of a highly reasonable probability. Most disciples of the esoteric tradition at that time did visit Egypt, which was the shrine and repository of the ancient wisdom. There is another account to the effect that Jesus studied in the monastery in Tibet and that records proving this still exist in some of the trans-Himalayan libraries. While it is also possible that Jesus, like Apollonius of Tyana, could have penetrated Asia, the Tibetan notion presents insurmountable obstacles. It should be remembered that the civilization of Tibet did not begin until the 7th or 8th century B. C. At that time Buddhist monks from India penetrated into the country and began the conversion of its people. There could not have been any high culture which would justify a long and hazardous journey among the Tibetans at the beginning of the 1st century A. D. In the time of Jesus the Tibetans were cannibals, without a written language or any important cultural institutions.

Contrary to the beliefs of the early church, there is every indication that Jesus did prepare himself for his ministry in one or more of the esoteric schools flourishing at his time. If he did not go to India, Egypt, or Greece, he enrolled himself in one of the Syrian groups which had derived their authority from the adept tradition of Chaldea, Persia, or the Lebanon. It is known that an es-

oteric school flourished at Mount Lebanon from before the time of Solomon the king. Modern Druses trace their origin to the initiates or "Cedars" of Lebanon.

Modern writers have a tendency to consider the Therapeutae of Lake Maotis in Egypt as a branch of the Essenian sect. The Therapeutae, the physicians of the soul, were a community of Jewish mystics who had fled from Alexandria to escape persecution as a minority group. Although the sect is now mentioned rather frequently, only one ancient writer has left any account of them. We are indebted to Philo Judaeus for all that is known of the Egyptian Therapeutae. Even his story has been questioned, but it is the consensus of opinion of recent scholars that Philo's narration is genuine. Although the Therapeutae have some doctrines in common with the Essenes we are not justified in regarding the two groups as identical. Whereas the Essenes were mystics, the Therapeutae were highly advanced intellectuals. This hermit brotherhood had but a brief existence because it provided no practical means for its own perpetuation. The group was highly socialized, even communized, but its members were devoted entirely to contemplation and reflection. They did not engage in any remunerative endeavor and literally perished for lack of funds. Those joining the Therapeutae must give away all their worldly possessions, bringing nothing with them but their clothing and their books.

We do not know how they tried to support themselves, for even the simplest way of life demands certain replenishments. Perhaps they depended upon the gifts of friends and relatives. If so, it is not likely they fared too well. Perhaps they believed that it was possible to retire to an unfrequented place and live off of the bounty of the land, but in Egypt the soil was not overly bountiful.

In the Therapeutae community each family had its own allotment, and they built small homes or houses each containing two rooms. In the larger room they lived; in the smaller room was a chapel for private worship. It is not known with certainty whether marriage was permitted, but both men and women



of pure life could become members. The Therapeutae are reminiscent of certain Hindu orders of extreme asceticism. The Asiatic mystics dwell either alone or in small groups in remote places, maintaining little if any contact with the outside world.

If the Therapeutae were impractical and improvident they had no regulations against the enjoyment of such creature comforts as came their way. They conserved small luxuries and dressed themselves with the best they possessed. Their austerities were entirely mental, and according to Philo they were a jolly, good-natured, optimistic group, bearing their privations with a rare sense of humor. To them happiness was the badge of the wise man, and superiority was judged solely by standards of advanced scholarship. They did not venerate age, electing their leaders for the maturity of their minds regardless of their years. Like the Essenes they recognized no class distinction and kept no slaves.

Once every seven weeks the Therapeutae assembled for their most solemn festival. All wore white robes, and gathered for a philosophical feast. They reclined on crude couches, not scorning cushions if they were available; the men on one side of the room, and the women on the other. The senior members were served by the novices. All were vegetarians, and their food was of the simplest kind seasoned with herbs. They drank only water. Before the meal there was a religious lecture, terminated by the members signifying that they had heard enough. When all had finished eating there was what Philo called "a sacred-singing dance." The male and female choruses, each directed by a leader, joined in imitation of the songs of Moses and Miriam at the crossing of the Red Sea. They understood the deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt as signifying the release of the human soul from the captivity of bodily passions.

There is a report that the Therapeutae had an initiation ritual and sacred writings, but no details of either have been preserved. If Jesus spent those unrecorded years among the Egyptians as the Jewish records would indicate, it is well

within reason that he could have visited this community of his own people which flourished beside Lake Maotis. The Last Supper, where Jesus celebrated the pass-over with his disciples, included sacred songs and dances like the banquets of the Therapeutae. But other groups had similar rituals, so we cannot afford to jump to conclusions. The Therapeutae vanished from history at about the same time as the Essenes. The disappearance has never been adequately explained, but in the case of the Egyptian group it may have been due to lack of financial support.

It is hardly necessary to enlarge upon other smaller mystical sects of the Jews in order to point up our primary concern. All of these fraternities were about the same in general structure, and as political problems increased most of the cults developed Messianic theories. Each was waiting for the coming of a Messiah who would liberate the Jewish people from their physical bondage to the Romans. As a result they were exterminated or scattered to prevent political agitation. The Cabalists emerged at about the time the other sects were fading from view; perhaps there is a connection.

It would be useful to a more intelligent grasp of Christian fundamentals to realize that Christianity was not a spontaneous revelation but the natural development of pre-Christian transcendentalism. We have so long regarded the Christian faith as separate and unique that we have lost sight of its true place in the descent of universal religion. We cannot hope to overcome the confusion and intolerance which have distinguished the later developments of Christian theology unless we grasp the larger pictures of world religion.

Instead of thinking of several major religious organizations toward which we should develop certain tolerant attitudes, let us rather realize that there is only one religion in the world. The faiths of men are merely human interpretations of one spiritual mystery. Just as the light of the sun results in a diversity of phenomena, so the light of truth has brought forth many faiths, which it nourishes and sus-



tains, each according to its own needs and requirements. No religion is unique.

The unfolding of the spiritual tradition of our race is an evolution of doctrines, a growth from one root. Just as civilization itself is built up layer upon layer, so religion is perfected by raising new structures on old foundations. Once we understand *the* religion of our race we have the keys to all the separate groups, cults, and sects. As man unfolds his own internal perceptive and reflective faculties he becomes more and more aware of the spiritual mystery about him and within him. It is the growth of man that brings the growth of religion. The eternal faith is always present, but men discover it by degrees. Each degree becomes a religion suitable to the time and conditions under which it is discovered. The discovery of a religion is much like the discovery of a friend. We meet someone and he becomes an acquaintance. As time passes and association gives opportunity, we begin to discover the qualities, ideals, and characteristics of our acquaintance. If we find these qualities compatible with our own dispositions, acquaintance verges toward friendship, not because our friend has changed but because we have learned to know him.

The religion of our race had its origin in the great mountain region of Central Asia. At a time long remote a spiritual revelation was given to the wild tribes dwelling in the trans-Himalayan highlands. The prophet of that time is referred to in the old writings as the father of the Arya. In a great house he called together the old men, the priests, the chiefs of the tribes, and those who practiced dreams and enchantments. He revealed to them the will of the gods, and established a covenant. In the end the great lord returned to the land of the immortals, leaving behind him the rites, rituals, and mysteries of his religion.

The migrations of the Arya tribes, first southward, and later in a westerly direction, extended the esoteric traditions of these people into India, Persia, the Near East, Europe, and finally the Western Hemisphere. All the dominant religions flourishing today either belong to the Arya complex or are compounds of Arya

and Atlantean esoteric traditions. Thus Brahmanism, Buddhism, Islamism, and modern Judaism are as much the faith of our race as is Christianity—all are blossoms upon a single plant. The same mystical and philosophical keys unlock the secret tradition of each of these religions, and the knowledge of one assists in the understanding of the others.

Syria, because of its geographical location, became an important center of spiritual culture. It was a meeting ground of East and West, for here merchants exchanged their wares and their opinions. Along the caravan routes from furthestmost Asia past the religions of the East to mingle in the market place with the faiths and philosophies of the Mediterranean countries.

We should remember that a new statement of spiritual ideals must come as the result of the meeting and mingling of older doctrines. Religions are subject to a law of generation and must be born in an atmosphere of spiritual democracy. Homogeneous cultures are not procreative for they are without the dynamic contrast which stimulates the mind to larger inclusive concepts.

Growth is a process of inclusion, and conversely decadence is a process of exclusion. Heterogeneous cultures, like heterogeneous nations, are dynamic for they present a constant challenge.

We find the same policy in the modern management of business. Experience has proved that even in the prosaic concerns of high finance the theory of tycoons is unsound. As time goes on we will have fewer "one-man corporations." Today great business organizations are governed by groups rather than by individuals. The skilled opinions of many united in a common cause insure a better-balanced program than the arbitrary, though brilliant, administration of one person.

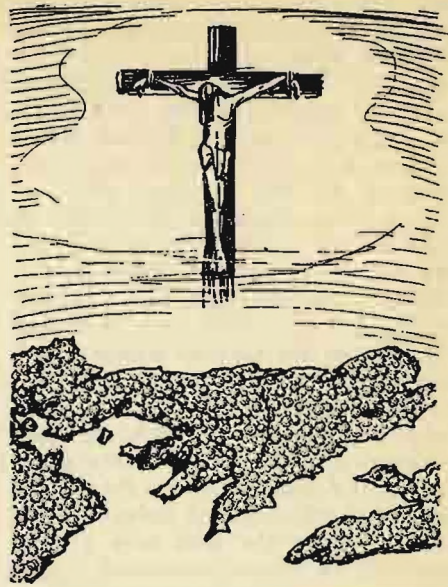
At the time we associate with the founding of our faith the Holy Land was a kind of alchemical bottle or magic cauldron, where a strange brew was foaming and bubbling. In addition to the old Jewish tradition, a compound of Chaldean, Babylonian, Egyptian, and indigenous Syrian elements, there was a conglomeration of imported beliefs. Hindu



occultism, Buddhist ethical agnosticism, Chinese mysticism, Persian anthropomorphism, Greek naturalistic idealism, Roman materialism, late-Egyptian metaphysics, scattered secret esoteric societies, and even primitive nature-cults with their magical practices mingled in colorful confusion and found what roots they could in the barren soil of Palestine. From this complicated mingling of East and West was born a new faith to meet a coming world emergency.

In its inception Christianity was distinctly eclectic; that is, it contained a mass of unrelated and ill-digested material, but this eclecticism was the secret of its survival. The faith was forced to develop from within itself certain common denominators, and in its search for these denominators it discovered two of dynamic importance: the twin concepts of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. It did not invent these convictions, but it emphasized them more successfully than most of the earlier faiths. The emphasis was due in part to geographical location and in part to psychological pressure. Most early religions were peculiar to nations or communities, and such conflict as arose was factional within one racial and even lingual complex. But Palestine was verging toward internationalism, not because it was a powerful country but because its citizens were the victims of countless infusions of outside cultures.

In addition to these factors the political condition of Syria played an important part. The history of the Jews is a long and tragic chronicle of war, bondage, and captivity. Oppression always stimulates national consciousness and binds oppressed groups to the common cause of their own survival. Minorities always develop that type of belligerence which bears witness to an inferiority complex. When we are frustrated in our effort to dominate externals we are inclined to retreat into ourselves and indulge in extravagant daydreaming as an escape mechanism. This very introversion brings with it powerful internal resolutions and an intensification of the reflective faculties. From the beginning of history most of the world's work has been accomplished



by neurotics. The extrovert scatters his resources, but the introvert develops penetration and one-pointedness of action.

The early Christians exhibited a fine inferiority complex. Nearly all of the Christian writers prior to the council of Nicea were apologists for their faith. They were a minority group subject to constant persecution, not only for their religious convictions but for their political views. Early in their history a division took place within the structure of the sect; in fact there are traces of this impending schism even in the gospel narratives. When Jesus said that his kingdom was not of this world some of his earliest followers differed strenuously. Gradually the break widened resulting in two armed camps. Those who held that the Christian mysteries were entirely metaphysical and internal, inspired such sects as the Syrian and Egyptian Gnosis and the cult of Manes. These were philosophical institutions fully aware of the esoteric tradition and the place of the Christian revelation in the unfoldment of the one world religion.

The second group was convinced that Christianity was destined to attain not only spiritual but material sovereignty. Their dream was a church triumphant through the machinery of a church mili-



tant. Naturally, a larger number of converts could understand physical revolution than could appreciate spiritual regeneration. Most of us still believe in policies of aggressive action. As the new sect plunged into politics, it achieved considerable temporal advantage at the expense of spiritual integrity. By convincing Constantine the Great that it could serve as a useful political ally, the new sect gained control of the Roman Empire. Having reached comparative security it then turned upon itself and stamped out the mystical groups which were its own heart and soul.

In order to maintain its claim to uniqueness the rising church attempted to destroy all evidence of its own pagan origin. It denied that it was the product of spiritual evolution and insisted that its believers accept the faith as a peculiar revelation immaculately conceived.

In times when most persons were unlearned and felt no drive toward scholarship, it was easy to convince them that in all things the church knew best and the church knew most. But the modern world through sad experience is less gullible. The unfolding human mind has outgrown the arbitrary boundaries of unquestioning allegiance to anything, human or divine. This does not mean that the thoughtful modern is an unbeliever or wishes to cast off his spiritual convictions. He merely wants the truth and he feels that he is strong enough to bear the consequences of factual thinking.

In this case the facts are far more beautiful, more significant, and more inspiring than the illusion. Instead of scholarly investigation destroying the sensitive substance of faith it justifies faith by revealing the true place of Christianity in the evolution of those human institutions which have been set up to explore and explain the secrets of God and nature.

Religiously speaking we are far stronger if we know that our faith is eternal than if we merely accept without question the statements of others about its eternity. We are also enriched if we discover that it is deep enough and wise enough to include within itself all progress and all learning. This larger understanding is absolutely necessary to the

accomplishment of the very end which Jesus himself required of his followers—the brotherhood of man. It is difficult to visualize the ultimate fraternity of the human family if one dominant sect is to force its convictions upon all the rest and exterminate those who refuse to be converted.

When the Christian can see all faiths within his own faith, and his own faith within all other faiths true spiritual democracy is within his grasp. It is no longer necessary to decide which amongst us is the holiest, and we also come to a fuller understanding of the essential nature of God. There are no longer believers and unbelievers, Christians and heathens, the elect and the damned. The religions of the world emerge as human institutions glorifying a divine reality. This is not only a realization which enriched the consciousness of the individual but a powerful social force toward world peace. Nearly all wars are holy or more correctly, unholy wars. Religious prejudices are always stimulated to justify military aggression. Whenever we fight we assume that God is on our side because we are the true believers. When someone asked Lincoln if God was on his side at the time of the Civil War, the President replied in substance that he was not so much concerned as to whether God was on his side but as to whether he was on God's side.

In the religion of the future we must come to know that God is always on the side of right, truth, beauty, wisdom, progress, and brotherhood. Someday we may even learn that God is on the side of peace, but we cannot have peace while we cause war, and we shall continue to cause war until our own internal understanding of the universal plan is deeper and more compelling than hate, pride, and selfishness. Christendom has a magnificent opportunity to bind up the wounds of mankind for it is the dominant faith of its day, but to be dominant is not enough. It cannot survive because it is stronger, numerically or politically; it can only survive if it proves through action that it is dedicated to the works of God and nature.



It is important that we examine into the origin of our faith, and it is equally important that we restore the streams of esoteric tradition which, flowing together, produced this new focal point in the descent of an ageless truth. We are not better because we are different, and we are not stronger because we stand alone; we are better and stronger when we have a larger consciousness. All spiritual motion is toward unity, toward the discovery and experience of oneness. That which divides is false to itself and the world and false to the teachings of Christ.

Nearly two thousand years ago a Syrian mystic, probably an initiate of secret societies dedicated even then to the essential values of humanity, preached a doctrine of brotherhood by the shores of Galilee. It is possible that he dreamed of a human destiny much like the little community of ascetics we know as the Essenes. These simple folk lived together in a condition of gentle friendliness. They reserved nothing for themselves but labored for the common good. They were not deceived by worldly wealth, honor, or position. They believed that each man should earn his bread with the sweat of his brow and that he should share it with the children, the aged, the widow, and the fatherless.

Again, Jesus may have known the Therapeutae who gave their lives to learning, convinced that men live in this world not merely to accumulate physical possessions but to study, improve themselves, and worship their God with song and dance and simple joys. Through the

teachings of Jesus an old world wise with living gave a legacy of spiritual security to a new world strong, ambitious, and intolerant. It is sad indeed that we have been content to deify the man, calling his name sacred and his words inspired, and at the same time have failed utterly to live his doctrine that we should love one another.

In the future other faiths will come to men, other prophets will lead them, other sages will instruct them, and other mystics will inspire them. Our religion will be part of the past like the religions of Egypt, Greece, and Rome, but *the* religion will not perish. The faiths of the past live in the faiths of today, and our religion will live in the faiths of tomorrow. It would be well for us to fix this realization in our hearts and minds so that we can seek everywhere for the inspiration and ideals we need in daily living.

It is also good to remember that small groups that appear to have limited spheres of influence and then pass away are not lost. It is quite possible that the little Essene community of four thousand common people is responsible for some of the highest concepts and convictions of modern men and women. There is a grandeur about this realization that into the one sublime motion of our spiritual convictions has been absorbed but never lost the teachings of all those inspired messengers who have come to the world in past ages. Not one of them lived or died in vain. Their doctrines are imperishable and the light that lighted the first man will cast its radiance upon the last man.



## NOTES ON GENIUS

Among the ancient Romans there was the belief that every child was born a twin. With each human baby a divine one was also created. This invisible infant godling was the constant companion of his mortal brother. During childhood they played together and later the invisible twin became the spiritual and intellectual partner in all earthly enterprises. This invisible brother was called 'the Genius,' and if the mortal half of the partnership acquired extraordinary distinction it was because of his 'Genius'. This is what is implied when we refer to a man as possessing genius. It simply means he is on close and intimate terms with his own divine twin.





## Interpreting Fairy Stories

**M**OST of the fairy tales, nursery rhymes, legends, myths and fables which have gladdened the hearts of young and old for countless generations have their origin in the folklore of ancient peoples. No civilized nation is without an elaborate pattern of legendry, and in the course of time the stories have passed from one country to another until it is extremely difficult to trace their origin.

The legend form as we know it today is associated especially with three great races of antiquity: the Chinese, the Hindu, and the Egyptian. It is safe to make the general statement that most fairy stories began in one of these three sources, or were common to all of them. In all probability the fairy story was intended for adult consumption rather than for children. The simplicity of the tales rendered them peculiarly suitable for perpetuation by the unschooled, and it is this same simplicity which has endeared them to the child mind.

As a preliminary to this general survey it will be well to classify folklore according to the principles or purposes behind the stories. In this way we gain valuable keys which may be applied to the processes of interpreting any particular legend or fable.

1. *The Myth.* Properly defined, a myth is a story involving divine beings. It may include the accounts of the creation of the gods, the formation of the world, the creation of man by the gods, stories of divine beings, their relationships with each other, and their intervention in the lives of mortals. In most countries mythology includes the struggle between good and evil gods for control over the world and over the lives of human beings.

Most myths originate with the observation of natural phenomena by primitive peoples unaware of the laws governing the forces of nature. One of the most celebrated and universal of all is the myth of the dying god. This includes the martyrdom of a divine being, his repose in the tomb, and his resurrection after an appropriate interval. This myth belongs to the order of the agrarian fables. It is the story of the planting of the seed in the ground, where it remains dead for a time and then rises in the form of the growing plant to become the savior of a hungry world. Because the growth of plants is controlled by the astronomical order of the seasons, the resurrection of the seed takes place in the spring and is celebrated in Christendom by the festival of Easter. The god Indra was the early Hindu deity of the wind, and he appears in Europe under the name Woden or Odin. Quetzalcoatl, the hero-god of the Aztecs, was also a wind-god. To the ancients the wind was the symbol of breath and represented the life principle—the holy ghost (from *gheist*), a motion of air—a gust.

Solar and lunar myths are at the root of innumerable fables. One-eyed gods are usually sun-spirits, and their adventures relate to the phenomenon of the seasons. Hercules and his Jewish equivalent, Sampson, are both sun-gods, and the twelve labors of Hercules represent the passage of the sun through the twelve signs of the zodiac. The Egyptian Osiris is a moon-god, and the events of his life correspond with the twenty-eight days of the lunar cycle.

The Christian Messiah takes on the attributes of a sun-god according to the accounts given in the Gospels, and in



this instance the solar myth is combined with the myth of the dying god.

2. *Hero Myths*. In this class must be included the legends of human beings who in various ways, usually magical, have come into possession of divine powers by which they are able to perform extraordinary exploits. The simple pattern of the hero myth is that the heroic person should overcome some horrible evil that threatens his nation or his time. By so doing he is elevated to the hero's estate by the gratitude of posterity. All heroes must come to the rescue of the helpless, the afflicted, the persecuted, and those variously endangered by forces of evil either physical, metaphysical, or demoniacal.

Usually the hero actually existed in some remote time, and performed actions of outstanding gallantry or ability. With the passing of time the historical man was involved either in the symbolism of the solar myth or in the myth of the dying god, or both. Sigurd, in German Siegfried, the dragon slayer and the hero of the great Icelandic epic, the *Volsunga Saga*, is a good example of this class of legend. Parsifal, the King of the Holy Grail, Prester John, the Emperor of the East, and the American Indian hero, Hiawatha, are examples of the hero myth.

3. *The Legend*. This type of account is usually associated with places, relics, and the curious lore which accumulates about unusual natural formations or remarkable structures built by men in prehistoric times. The legend is a means of explaining that which is reasonably beyond explanation, and frequently makes use of miracles to solve the dilemma. Old ruined castles along the Rhine, the crumbling abbeys of England, curious rock formations in Afghanistan, the great pyramid of Giza, and the wall of China, are all fit subjects for legendry. As it is the purpose of the legend to explain, it makes use of elements derived from customs, traditions, and local beliefs.

There is also a class of legend which deals with persons whose actions defy normal explanation; therefore legends spring up about heroes such as Charle-

magne, Barbarossa, Genghis Khan, and Joan of Arc.

4. *The Allegory*. To this order of accounts belong such stories as personalize impersonal qualities and attributes, or reduce universal truths to a comprehensible state by means of fiction. Most religious rituals are allegorical because they represent divine processes at work in human life. The mystery dramas of the ancient Greeks in which the heavenly order of gods was represented by masked actors who played out the great dramas of the cosmos, are properly termed sublime allegories.

5. *The Fable*. In this class belong stories about simple conduct that teach a lesson. One of the largest classes of fables is that in which animals are endowed with human attributes, usually to ridicule human actions. The Hindus seem to have originated this mode of instruction, and its great exponent among the Greeks was the hunchback slave Aesop.

By means of the fable common errors of human nature are exposed in an amusing form which reveal the stupidity of these actions. For this reason the fable is especially useful in the instruction of the young because it belongs to an order of character building traditions. By the use of familiar simile the fable becomes generally understandable and is remembered throughout life.

6. *The Parable*. This is a construction which points out a course of conduct under a particular circumstance by reference to some natural phenomena, or a parallel course of conduct under another circumstance. The parable, like the fable, is rooted in generally accepted opinion about right and wrong. The most celebrated of all parables are those used by Jesus in the instruction of his disciples and followers. The parable of the mustard seed and that of the talents are familiar to all, and reveal in words of one syllable the proper course of human action under certain conditions.

7. *The Miracle Play*. It was customary during the medieval period of the Christian Church to portray incidents from the life of Christ, the apostles, and the saints, in the form of religious



dramas given on the broad flat space in front of the cathedrals and churches. These miracle plays combined fable, parable, and moralism, and served as a method for instructing the illiterate in the principles of Christian morality. To this group also belongs the morality play—the only drama permitted by the early Church.

In Oriental countries, miracle plays and morality plays are sometimes presented with small puppets or dolls instead of living persons. This also occurred in Europe, and the modern Punch and Judy show is a survival of a religious drama in which Punch was Pontius Pilate and Judy was Judas Iscariot.

8. *The Fairy Story Proper.* This must deal with one of the orders of mysterious sprites or elemental spirits such as gnomes or dwarfs, nymphs or undines, salamanders or fire spirits, and sylphs or air spirits. The familiar winged fairy with her magic wand is a sylph or air spirit from the Persian name for these little creatures—*Peri*.

The fairy story has gradually increased in scope until it includes elements of legendry, hero myth, allegory, and morality play. The proper fairy story must have a happy ending. The fairy prince saves the fairy princess and they live happily together forever, contrary to all reasonable expectancy.

One of the most familiar of all fairy stories is Cinderella. In various forms this story recurs in the literature of China, India, Egypt, Greece, Scandinavia, Russia, the Balkans, and even among the American Indians. Fairy stories have been defined as man's natural imagining toward the beautiful and the expression of his inner conviction of the ultimate victory of right over wrong. It is therefore definitely related to the hero myth in which the virtuous person triumphs over adversity. The books of Horatio Alger, so popular with the young people of the last generation, were fairy stories built upon the theme that virtue triumphs.

9. *The Political Fable.* A number of familiar fairy stories and nursery rhymes originated as political satire; thinly veiled denunciations of the corruption which

existed in the Church and State. Mother Hubbard and her empty cupboard seems to have begun as a denunciation of the extravagances of Queen Elizabeth who kept her cupboard, the national treasury, forever empty. The Mother Goose rhyme about Mistress Mary quite contrary was dedicated to the peculiarities of Mary, Queen of Scots, whose contrary notions were the scandal of her time. The Shakespearean plays abound in the element of optical fable, and the *Midsummer Night's Dream* was a direct attack upon King James I, who is represented with the head of a donkey bellowing for his Scotch 'porridge'.

10. *Curse Legends.* A considerable order of fables has sprung up about the belief that ill luck follows those who do wrong, until they have repented of their sins. The idea began from a practical observation of the consequences of wrong doing, and the offenses regarded as most reprehensible at the time the fable was devised received the greatest weight of odium. The most famous of the curse fables are the stories, *The Wandering Jew* and *The Flying Dutchman*.

11. *The Philosophical Fable.* Certain esoteric doctrines preserved in secret by orders of initiated persons have been represented and perpetuated under fables, legends, allegories, symbols, emblems, figures, and various other devices. These devices are meaningless to the profane, but convey a profound meaning to those who are a party to the secret.

Under such a heading should be included the curious symbol of the alchemists, astrologers, and cabalists, the myths of the Rosicrucians and Illuminati, and the legends of early Freemasonry. The quest after universal wisdom became the search for the philosopher's stone, the universal medicine, the pearl of great price, or the holy grail. An interesting example of philosophical symbolism is the ordinary deck of playing cards which had its origin among the Egyptians. Another is the die used in gambling, and a third is the chessboard.

In studying the modern fairy story it is necessary to realize that any or all of the various elements described above may be present in a single story. The



story itself may be ancient or it may be a modern devisement built upon ancient or traditional patterns. It is well, if possible, to determine the antiquity of the particular tale under consideration. Good places to look for the originals of modern stories are the *Animal Fables of India*, *Aesop's Fables*, *The Red Chamber Stories of China*, *The Arabian Nights*, and the writings of Homer.

If it is impossible to trace the story to these sources and no outside source of information is available, then the tale must be examined to discover the general design of the inner content. A little thought will reveal the framework, and we can decide whether we are dealing with a hero myth, a morality legend, a fable, or a parable. Context is also important. If the legend occurs among the writings of alchemists or mystics it may reasonably be suspected that the interpretation is according to the doctrines of these groups.

A broad knowledge of comparative religion, the arts and sciences, sociology, ethics, and politics is useful in classifying legends of all kinds. For example, consider the story of Tannhauser and his visit to the Venusberg. The story belongs to the order of curse legends. Tannhauser commits a sin against his faith, for which he must repent in order to gain ultimate forgiveness. The Venusberg belongs to the pre-Christian lore of central Europe, and of course represents heathenism and degeneracy. Elizabeth signifies Tannhauser's own spiritual soul and redemption through pure love. As Tannhauser visits the Venusberg under the earth we have traces of the agricultural myth of the seed that dies and rises again. This is further pointed up by the blossoming of the pilgrim's staff as a sign of forgiveness. The blossoming staff is derived from apocryphal legends of the New Testament where it is said that Joseph was selected to be the husband of Mary because his rod budded on the altar of the temple. In Tannhauser there are evidences of the hero myth also, for he accomplishes his own regeneration and becomes a hero. In substance the Tannhauser theme is that of the fall of man into sin and his redemption through

grace, and can be traced back in broad outline to the parable of the prodigal son.

There is a psychological phase which must be taken into consideration in all legendry. Human beings develop two kinds of mechanisms in thinking. The first is defense mechanism, and the second is escape mechanism. Defense mechanism is dedicated to the justification of present conduct. The mind creates innumerable devices to protect the personality from pain, humiliation, and unpleasant comparison. This mechanism usually falls back upon tradition to justify familiar ways of action, and builds defenses against the discomforts of innovation or change. Many legends and fables are intended to glorify race, nation, and community. These defense mechanisms are most marked among peoples dominated by an inferiority complex.

The escape mechanism is a release of the normal human impulse to be happy. If happiness is not to be attained under existing conditions, then at some future time or under some different conditions or in some far place the dream of happiness will be fulfilled. If necessary the supernatural is invoked to bring about the desired state when this is contrary to natural expectations. The concept of heaven is the ultimate religious form of the escape mechanism. In this same class belongs the story *Lost Horizon* with its fabled city of Shangri-La. Human beings desire physical immortality, and many stories of escape mechanism involve the 'long livers', mortal creatures who discovered in some way the fountain of youth. Most mortals desire to be rich and escape from present poverty. For such as these the treasures of the *Arabian Nights* and such stories as *The Count of Monte Cristo* possess an eternal fascination.

Thus natural human instincts play their part in framing legend and fable. There is no truer way of discovering the soul of a people than through the study of its folklore. Here are revealed the secret impulses which men would fear to express openly but which they treasure in the depths of their natures.

The method by which history is gradually transformed into legend reveals an-



other process eternally at work in the human mind. Most legends originated in times when history was perpetuated by oral tradition. When a man tells a story he nearly always adds elements of personal interpretation to the original account. It is a constant and consistent ambition to convert others to our ways of thinking. To accomplish this we color narratives with conclusions of our own without revealing our additions to the stories. In this way we believe that we can bestow the dignity of tradition upon our personal opinion and pass our exaggerations as part of the original account.

Thus stories accumulate new elements, with each generation taking on the color of locality and revealing the secret convictions of each storyteller who passes them along. For example, Goethe's story of Faust is built up from divers elements gathered from a wide variety of sources. In its final form, *Faust* is philosophical fiction, again a variation on the prodigal son theme with the escape mechanism of final salvation. Yet the original Dr. Faust was a real person who dabbled in sorcery, gained the local reputation of being a necromancer, and was finally discovered with a knife in his back on the floor of his laboratory, the victim of an unknown assassin. Because the town folk were convinced that he was in league with the devil, it was the solemn self-justifying conviction of these honorable burghers that the devil himself had murdered the old alchemist in order to gain control of his immortal soul. Robbery was a much more likely explanation, but this did not fit in so well with the pattern of the local gossip, so the reasonable was ignored in favor of the impossible.

Then another element was incorporated into the fabric of this rapidly developed legend. A man by the name of Fust worked with Guttenburg in the invention of the printing press. These two men were able to produce what appeared to be hand-written books far more rapidly than God had intended. There could be but one explanation. These printers were in league with the devil, and rubricated their books with human blood. Old

engravings show the Prince of Evil turning the crank on the old printing press. It is in this way that Satan himself became the printer's devil.

The name Fust sounded quite a bit like Faust, and the two men were merged into a common fiction. Other legends were added from the lives of several alchemists, cabalists, and magicians, until finally the perfect sorcerer came into existence and his story became the substance of the public conviction of the time relating to matters of demonism.

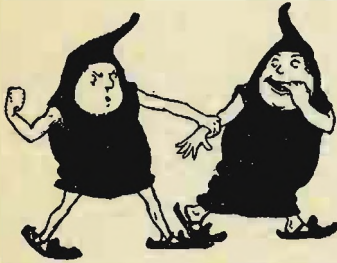
Another fairy tale with a similar background is the story of Bluebeard and his secret closet filled with the bodies of his murdered wives. The original Bluebeard was Giles de Rais who was burned at the stake for the unpleasant practice of offering human sacrifices on the altar of Satan. He was a nobleman who lived in a gloomy old castle. When numerous women and children disappeared from the neighboring villages an investigation was made, and their bodies were found in the cellars of his castle. He was properly tried by the holy inquisition, found guilty on innumerable counts, admitted his guilt, and was duly executed. He is usually pictured with a long black beard, and it is by this beard that he is especially remembered in story and legend.

In several languages the word for fairy is associated with the word for fate; for example, the Italian *fata*, and the Latin *fatare* from *fatum*, meaning fate or destiny. From this we may infer that fairies were regarded as mischievous creatures associated with curious tricks of fate and miraculous happenings in general. For the most part fairies were regarded as benevolent and they came to the assistance of mortals in distress, righting wrongs and protecting worthy persons from the evil deeds of others.

In many fairy tales these good spirits preserve their human friends from the plots of evil beings, witches, sorcerers, giants, and ogres. Modern writers of children's stories usually follow traditional patterns, thus perpetuating the ancient belief that good and evil spirits variously affect mortals with their supernatural powers.



The most celebrated of all books about fairy creatures is the *Comte de Gabalais*, by the *Abbe* N. de Montfaucon de Villars. This book, which was published in the 17th century, was called "A Rosicrucian Fable" and most modern authors have derived inspiration from its contents. The learned *Abbe* went into great detail about the life and habits of fairy creatures and was rewarded for his industry by being assassinated. Villars derived much of his inspiration from the work of Paracelsus on submundanes. Alexander Pope's beautiful poem, *The Rape of the Lock*, is based on the writings of Villars. One of the most famous of modern stories about the fairies, *Undine*, is a direct development of this early source of material.



The universal distribution of the belief in fairies can be satisfactorily explained in terms of the psychic sensitivity of primitive people. All antiquity united in accepting the reality of elemental creatures. Paracelsus went so far as to classify the traditions in the form of a general text in which the reality of the submundanes is assumed and their lives, habits, and temperaments described in considerable detail.

Paracelsus declared that the four elements—earth, water, fire, and air—are inhabited with beings composed entirely of the substances of these elements and the ethers which sustain and nourish the elements. The element of water is the world of the nymphs, undines and sea sprites. The element of fire is the abode of the salamanders who are divided into several orders of igneous creatures. The element of air is the sphere of the sylphs, fairies, fays, and storm elementals, and the element of the world is inhabited by gnomes and dwarfs.

The creatures of the elements are composed entirely of one substance, have no immortal souls, but live to great age because there is no friction in their organisms. They are divided into families, tribes, races, and nations, are ruled over by kings and princes of their own kind, and have their homes and places of abode. Their clothing is part of their bodies. They are not subject to disease, but they do engage in wars. The elementals sometimes concern themselves in the affairs of men. The gnomes become the faithful servants of magicians but are jealous and revengeful. The undines become strongly attached to humans, as do also the sylphs, but these last are extremely mischievous. The salamanders seldom approach human beings because their fiery element is destructive to human life.

There are many legends that celebrated magicians and philosophers were the product of the union of an elemental and a human being. Merlin, the magician at the court of King Arthur, is believed to have been the product of such a union. There is an account that the father of Pythagoras was a sylph, and there is a story in the Near East that Zoroaster was the son of the king of the salamanders and a mortal woman.

Among many nations it was believed that the earth was inhabited by elementals prior to the creation of man. The Irish, for example, have their stories of the little people who were driven into the fens and marshes by the human progenitors of the present Irish race. In Norse mythology we find the stories of the *Niebelung*, an order of dwarfs belonging to the class of gnomes who mined the treasures of the earth. The seven little miners in the fairy story of *Snow White* are *Niebelungs*, the keepers of the hidden treasures of the earth.

It has been suggested that the belief in fairies may have its physical origin in legends about primitive races of pygmies. But classical antiquity was too learned in general to support such a belief. It is wiser to assume either a psychical or a psychological background for the tradition. It was common to believe that elemental beings were part of nature's econ-



omy, for they were the keepers and preservers of the lower forms of life in the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms. The fairy story formula recurs with such consistency among widely scattered nations that it is evident that all the stories are aspects of a single basic conviction universally distributed.

Take, for example, the story of Santa Claus. The name Santa Claus is said to be a corruption of *Saint Nicholas*. It is therefore interesting to note that the legend flourished among non-Christian people and was well-established in pre-Christian time. Saint Nicholas was a sort of theological Robin Hood. Moved by his saintly conviction, this good man pilfered from the rich and secretly redistributed the goods among the poor. His mystical kleptomania was accepted and respected even by those whose possessions he spirited away. When Saint Nicholas left the house a quick inventory might reveal that a gilt cup or silver candlestick left with him. Said cup or candlestick might reappear in the hovel of some poor farmer or destitute widow. This mystery was regarded as an act of Providence, assisted by the ingenuity of the good saint. Hence he became the symbol of secret giving, and when the child found a new doll on Christmas morning the parents solemnly announced that Saint Nicholas had brought it. Time and the charm of the fable resulted in the present universal belief.

But all this happened long before kindly Saint Nicholas secreted the family silver in his broad sleeves. Little Egyptian children found toys hidden about their homes on the day of the birth of the sun-god. They were told that a mysterious little old man no taller than a child's knee and adorned with a long beard brought them the toys from his mysterious workshop at the North Pole. When the Egyptian god Bes was turned out of his house in the Far North by Christian theologians, Saint Nicholas moved in and took over the chores.

The Greeks also have their god of secret giving, as do the Chinese, and while the details differ the principle is always the same. The Indians of southwest America make little dolls which

they give to their children secretly. These little dolls are said to have been made and brought to the children by gods living in the old mountains whose white crests line the distant sky. When Loki, the fire-god of the Scandinavians, married, he became the father of a strange brood. Among his children were Midgard, a great serpent whose body lay beneath the ocean and encircled the whole earth, and Fenris the wolf, a horrible creature of monstrous size who ravaged the world, and crouching in the Far North with flaming red eyes and drooling jowls waited to devour both gods and men. Fenris is the big bad wolf of modern fairy tales. It is he who ate poor old grandma and then hid in her bed waiting for little Red Riding Hood to appear.

After Loki, whose flaming body gave rise to Mephisto's scarlet coat, had betrayed the gods and brought about the death of Balder the Beautiful, he was punished by being chained beneath the earth. Above him was placed a poisonous serpent whose venom dropped incessantly upon the body of Loki. These drops of venom caused indescribable suffering, and the chained god twisted and writhed with pain. It is thus that the old Norse people explained the earthquake and the avalanche. It was their belief that drops of water (the venom of the snake) seeped through the earth and came in contact with the subterranean fires, causing combustion in the underworld. This combustion produced seismic disturbances.

Some fairy stories originate in an observation of natural phenomena. It was once regarded as only a myth that in the home of the gods in the Far North, day and night were six months each. Now we know that in a sense the phenomenon of the midnight sun explains the legend.

Fairy stories belonging to the class of Jack the Giant-killer go back to such legends as Apollo slaying the snake Python, the labors of Hercules, and the Egyptian story of the young Horus slaying the giant Typhon. In the Scandinavian legends Siegfried, the dragon-slayer, is merely a restatement of the Baby-



Ionian account of Bel, the slayer of the dragon of chaos.

The dragon represents cosmic energy and it is still used in this way in the symbolism of the Chinese. All giants are forms of the Titans, the Greek giants who represented in their warfare the struggle of energies in space prior to the creation of the cosmos. Jack the Giant-killer is one of the aspects of the eternal legend of man conquering nature. To accomplish this conquest he must have recourse to certain magical aids; often this aid takes the form of a magic sword like the *excalibur* of King Arthur and the singing blade of Siegfried. The sword always represents the human will by which the forces of nature can be controlled.

The Nordic Thor, the equivalent of Hercules, fought the giants of darkness with a magic hammer of red hot iron. In order to use this hammer Thor had to wear a fire-resisting glove. This hammer is the thunderbolt of Zeus, with one curious difference. Thor's hammer was so shaped that when he threw it, it always returned to him. The shape of the hammer was the swastika, a universal symbol of will overcoming chaos. The hammer has come into ill repute as a symbol of the Nazi party, but strangely enough the Germans have reversed the direction of the angle on the arms of the central cross so that the whirling cross, as it is called, turns in the opposite direction from that of the ancient symbolism.

The typical fairy story usually includes a romantic pattern. Nearly always the hero performs his brave actions for the sake of the fair princess of his heart. Sometimes he is the poor boy who makes good, sometimes he is a prince in his own right, but always he is rescuing a fair damsel in distress. The romantic story as we know it is as ancient and basic as human emotions, but it was adapted to the fairy story form largely by the Bards and Troubadours. These were the wandering minstrels and story tellers who entertained in the homes of the rich and the great. Nearly always they sang of the beautiful maiden held prisoner in the castle of some fearful

giant, wicked king, or horrible sorcerer. Always this fair maiden was the personification of all virtues and excellence, and she was rescued by the young hero who passed through all kinds of dangers for her sake. This is the story of knight-errantry and the codes of the age of chivalry.

Now the Bards and the Troubadours were a guild bound together by vows into a secret Platonic fraternity. The woman of whom they sang was not a mortal person at all, but the virgin Sophia, the gnostic symbol of spiritual truth. It was truth, therefore, truth supremely beautiful and supremely good, that was held prisoner by evil men. It was the truth seeker who dared all in life, who went in quest of universal wisdom. It was this same truth for which the heroic soul fought against the enchantments of the mortal world. By slaying evil—overcoming the wicked plots inspired by selfishness and ambition—the truth is finally liberated to become the bride of the one who has earned it. Once this is accomplished the prince and the princess, man and truth, live happily forever after. In sober fact, truth *is* the only thing which can abide with man forever.

In the forms of the legend we have Siegfried rescuing the sleeping Brünhilde from the circle of flame, Perseus saving Andromeda from the dragon of the deep, and the young prince forcing his way through the forest of brambles to waken Sleeping Beauty. Frequently the princess sleeps until her Prince Charming wakens her. This means that truth remains unknown, unknowable, and inactive, until man wakens it with his mind and will.

An advanced form of this mythology is concealed in the story of Parsifal. In this legend, as adapted by Wagner for his opera, Parsifal himself is a form of man who became Christ by spiritual attainment. Kundry, the snake maiden, appears in the role of Mary of Magdala who dried the feet of the Saviour with her hair. The symbolism is daring in the extreme, for the name Kundry is obviously derived from Kundalini, the serpent power in the human spine.



Among the Greeks and Latins, Mercury was the god of thieves, especially those who were waiting to be hung for their crimes. In the northern myths Odin, who was a form of Mercury, hangs himself to the world tree, thus becoming a type of the convicted criminal. Christ crucified between two thieves and suffering the penalty reserved for common criminals belongs to the same class of symbolism. It must be remembered that under Roman law religious or political criminals were not crucified. Mercury appears again in the form of Robin Hood, and Odin reappears in Germany in the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin.

There is something of the survival of tradition in every action that we perform and in all the customs which have become familiar to us through folklore. Picking up pins for good luck is a survival of the time when pins were rare and expensive, and were sold to the public only once a year. Pin money was money saved for the purpose of buying pins, and the good luck due to the direction in which the pin lay at the time it was found is associated with early experiments with the compass point. The ill luck of thirteen at the table originated with the Last Supper of Christ and his disciples, and Friday the 13th is supposed to be a compound evil because it combines the day of the week on which Christ was crucified with the ill-fated thirteen at supper.

It was John Baptiste Portia who first emphasized the similarity in appearance between human beings and certain animals. He wrote a learned book on this subject in which he points out that these similarities are nearly always accompanied by similarities of temperament and disposition. Portia did not originate the belief that animal appearance was especially related to animal qualities. The Greeks and Romans made use of these elements in numerous fables. Pythagoras taught that human beings coming into birth descended through the spheres of the zodiacal constellations and took on the appearances of the heavenly animals. This explains the Pythagorean doctrine that men were reborn as animals; a doc-

trine generally misunderstood by modern writers.

The outstanding work of animal fables is the collection attributed to Aesop. Later came the adventures of Reynard the Fox, whose exploits have fascinated countless generations of children and adults.

The brothers Grimm collected their stories from the folklore of the German peasants. Therefore most of Grimm's fairy tales belong to an early period. We shall select one belonging to the class of morality stories as an example for interpretation. The tale is called *The Shroud*. It is the story of a little boy seven years old who was so handsome and lovable that everyone adored him. His mother was therefore grief-stricken when he suddenly became ill and died. After his death she could not be comforted, and wept day and night for her lost child. Soon after the child was buried he appeared by night in the places where he played during life. If the mother wept the little spirit wept also. The mother's grief increased, and at last one night the little boy came to her dressed in his white shroud and with the wreath of funeral flowers about his head, and he spoke thus, "Oh mother, do stop crying or I shall never fall asleep in my coffin, for my shroud will not dry because of all thy tears which fall upon it." The mother was so frightened that she wept no more. The next night the boy came again holding a little light in his hand saying, "Look, mother, my shroud is nearly dry, and I can rest in my grave." When the mother heard this she gave her sorrow into God's keeping and the child returned no more.

This is a folk tale based on the esoteric tradition of earthbound souls. The excessive grief for those who have departed prevents them from going on to the life beyond. The little boy could not escape from the vibrations of his mother's sorrow so he returned to her and taught her the wise course to follow. The story has application to the lives of many modern people. We still try to hold our loved ones to us after the laws of nature have decreed that they depart. It is not wise or good to grieve for the dead; rather we should release them and



send them forth on their great adventure with loving thoughts for their good, and not selfish impulses of our own.

Stories like *Hansel and Gretel*, the babes in the woods, belong to the class of humanity tales based on the struggle of the human being to conquer the mysteries of his earth life. Hansel and Gretel are man and woman, the dark forest is the physical world, and the wicked witch in the sugar cake house is the force of spiritual destruction hiding behind the illusions of the senses and the gratifications of the appetites. The witch fattens the children, that is, gives human beings false success in order

to devour them. In Egypt, Typhon, the god of death, devours human beings who have departed from the spiritual way of life. Hansel and Gretel are sent into the forest three times to represent the three races through which human beings have been born into the material world.

The real meanings of fairy stories must be discovered by the unfolding consciousness of the reader, for they are mediums for the release of his own misunderstanding. The more he knows of philosophy and mysticism the richer the stories become, until in the end he discovers in each of them some great truth about himself and his world.



Visiting a dying man who was bewailing his misfortune that he was to pass out of this life at a great distance from his own country, Diogenes reassured him with these words: "Be of comfort, my good friend, for the ways to the next world are alike from every place."

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A certain man, terrified by a dream, came to Diogenes asking for assistance in the interpretation of his sleep experience. The old cynic listened to the story of the man's mental anguish and then asked, "Why is it that you are never concerned with the happenings which occur while you are awake, but make the interpretation of the fancies of your sleep your greatest business?"

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Once upon a time Diogenes, passing an apothecary shop, noted that its proprietor was a former wrestler who had been defeated so often that he had decided to go into a new line of business. "Why have you become an apothecary?" called out Diogenes. "Is it to revenge yourself upon those that you have not been able to worst in any other way?"

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"Of what animals, oh noble Diogenes, should it be said they are most dangerous to man?" The cynic thought for a moment. "Of wild beasts," he answered, "the most dangerous is the detractor, and of tame brutes the most dangerous is the flatterer."

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A man of mean disposition once addressed Diogenes thus: "Only those who are fit for philosophy should study philosophy, and you are unfit." After regarding the stranger for a moment, Diogenes answered, "By the same law, you should die."



## The Penitentes and the Folk Art in New Mexico



THE Penitentes are the members of a religious sect that exists principally among the Spanish-American communities of New Mexico. The strongholds of the order are Sandoval, Mora, Taos, San Miguel, Colfax, Rio Arriba, and Valencia, counties of New Mexico, and the society extends into southern Colorado. The order of the Penitent Brothers is incorporated as a benevolent organization under the laws of the state of New Mexico.

Formerly, each of the Penitente villages had its own group, and most of the early historians of the order have stated that there was no general head to the society. Recently it is reported that the various local groups are organized and their affairs administered by an elected or appointed superior.

The Penitentes practice flagellation as a religious discipline of penance and at times also use other means of self-torture. In the past members of the cult, selected by certain rituals, were crucified during the Good Friday ceremony. Most writers on the Penitentes have stated that the activities of the order are limited to Lent,

but this is not strictly true. Services which may include flagellation or other severe disciplines are held on All-Saints Day, Corpus Christi Day, Founding of the Cross Day, and the Days of Saints held in special veneration locally. There are also ceremonies in connection with funeral rites of the Penitentes or members of their immediate family.

Although the brotherhood is nominally Catholic and is believed to have stemmed from The Third Order of St. Francis, there has been friction between the Penitentes and the Church for many years. This has not worried the members of the order who continued their practices in the face of the displeasure of the local priests. Recently, we are informed their differences have been settled.

As the Penitentes are the only public flagellants within the boundaries of the United States, it is of interest to all students of comparative religion to examine the origin of this religious practice.

The practice of flagellation seems to have been imported into Christian nations from the Orient where disciplines of mortification have existed from most ancient times. It gained favor among early Christian communities because both Christ and his apostles had suffered scourging. It was also associated by the Greeks and Romans with the worship of certain of their deities. This may have influenced its early appearance in the Church.

Flagellation became general in Europe during the 11th century when Peter Damian of Ravenna, abbot of the Benedictine Monastery of Santa Croce d'Avellano near Gubbio in Italy, afterward Cardinal Bishop of Ostia, recommended scourging as an atonement for sin, to



Christians generally, and to the monks in particular.

Between the 13th and 16th centuries flagellant groups appeared in various parts of Europe. Stripped to the waist and with their faces hidden by masks or hoods, the members of these bands wandered about chanting doleful hymns and scourging themselves in the public squares of the towns through which they passed. Each member enrolled himself for thirty-three days in honor of the thirty-three years of Christ's life upon earth.

There were several important recurrences of flagellant orders. One began A. D. 1260 at Perugia and extended to Bavaria, Austria, Moravia, Bohemia, Poland, and France. These Penitentes pretended to have received a divine revelation to the effect that voluntary scourging atoned for all sins and was a substitute for the sacraments and ministrations of the clergy.

Another outbreak of flagellation occurred about 1349. It was more violent than before. Men and women went about half naked, and scourged themselves on roads, streets, and in front of churches. The immediate cause was the terrible outbreaks of bubonic plague, known as the *Black Death*. Groups sprang up in the Rhine provinces of upper Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, and even England. Although excluded from France, these flagellants forced their way into Avignon, then the residence of the popes, but the mania died out after it had been condemned by Clement VI.

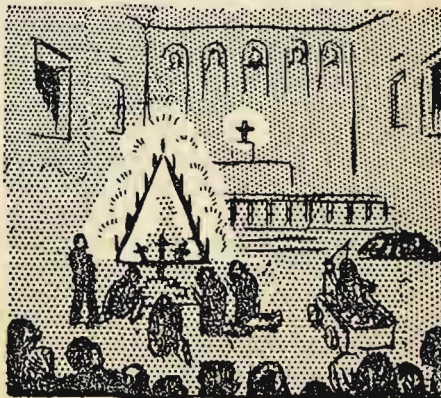
In 1414 a new troop of flagellants, called Flegler, appeared in Thuringia and lower Saxony. They rejected all religious usages and formal worship, depending for salvation entirely upon 'faith and flagellation.' They were severely punished by the Inquisition. Many were condemned to death, including Conrad Schmidt the leader, who was burned at Sangerhausen in 1414.

After the Council of Constance (1414-18) both the clergy and the laity gradually abandoned flagellation. The Franciscan monks of France, the Cordeliers, were among the last to give up the practice.

The *Chronicon Ursitius Basiliensis* by St. Justin of Padua, included an account of the Italian Order of Flagellantes of the 13th century. He wrote as follows: "When all Italy was sullied with crimes of every kind, a certain sudden superstition, hitherto unknown to the world, first seized the inhabitants of Perusa, afterwards the Romans, and then almost all the nations of Italy.

"To such a degree were they affected with the fear of God, that noble as well as ignoble persons, young and old, even children five years of age, would go naked about the streets without any sense of shame, walking in public, two and two, in the manner of solemn procession. Everyone of them held in his hand a scourge, made of leather thongs, and with tears and groans they lashed themselves on their backs til the blood ran: all the while weeping and giving tokens of the same bitter affliction, as if they had really been spectators of the passion of our Saviour, imploring the forgiveness of God and his Mother, and praying that he who had been appeased by the repentance of so many sinners, would not disdain theirs.

"And not only in the daytime, but likewise during the night, hundreds, thousands, and ten-thousands of these Penitentes ran notwithstanding the rigors of winter about the streets and in the Churches, with lighted wax candles in their hands, and preceded by the priests, who carried crosses and banners along with them, and with humility prostrated





themselves before the altars: the same scenes were to be seen in small towns and villages; so that the mountains and the fields seemed to resound alike the voices of men who were crying to God.

"All musical instruments and love songs ceased to be heard. The only music that prevailed both in town and country was that of the lugubrious voice of the Penitente, whose mournful accents might have moved hearts of flint: and even the eyes of the obdurate sinner could not refrain from tears. Nor were the women exempt from the general spirit of devotion we mention: for not only those among the common people, but also matrons and young ladies of noble families, would perform with modesty the same mortifications in their own rooms.

"Then those who were at enmity with one another became again friends. Usurers and robbers hastened to restore their ill-gotten riches to their rightful owners. Others, who were contaminated with different crimes, confessed them with humility, and renounced their vanities. Gaols were opened; prisoners were delivered; and banished persons permitted to return to their native habitations.

"So many and so great works of sanctity and Christian charity, in short, were then performed by both men and women, that it seemed as if a universal apprehension had seized mankind, that the divine power was preparing either to consume them by fire or destroy them by shaking the earth, or some other of those means which divine justice knows how to employ for avenging crimes.

"Such a sudden repentance, which had thus diffused itself all over Italy and had even reached other countries, not only the unlearned, but wise persons also admired. They wondered whence such a vehement fervor of piety could have proceeded: especially since such public penances and ceremonies had been unheard of in former times, had not been approved by the sovereign pontiff, not recommended by any preacher or person of eminence; but had taken their origin among simple persons, whose example both learned and unlearned had alike followed."

In *New Mexico, The Land of the Delight Makers*, George Wharton James

describes a procession of Flagellantes which appeared in Germany in the 14th century. Two hundred of the self-whippers came from Schwaben to Spira under one principal and two subordinate rulers, whose commands they followed implicitly. A detailed account of this circumstance is preserved in the *Chronicle of Albert of Strasburg* (A. D. 1349): "They were met by crowds of people. Placing themselves within a circle drawn on the ground, they stripped, leaving on their bodies only a breechcloth. They then walked with arms outstretched like a cross round and round the circle for a time, finally prostrating themselves on the ground. They soon rose, each striking his neighbor with a scourge, armed with knots and four iron points, regulating their blows by the singing of psalms.

"At a certain signal the discipline ceased, and they threw themselves on their knees, then flat on the ground, groaning and sobbing. On rising, the leader gave a short address, exhorting them to implore the mercy of God upon their benefactors and enemies, and also on the souls in purgatory. This was followed by another prostration, and then another discipline. Those who had taken charge of the clothes now came forward, and went through the same ceremonies."

The first missionaries and priests to reach the area in New Mexico where the Penitentes flourish were the Franciscan *frailes* who came with the Spanish adventurers. These fathers were deeply imbued with the conviction and example of St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of their order. In times of stress or emergency they found spiritual solace in the mortification of the flesh.

In *The Franciscan Message in Authentic Texts* edited by Fr. Maximus Poppy, O. F. M., and issued as a manual for writers and interpreters of the Franciscan message, is the following description of the austerities practiced by St. Francis: "He wore a hair shirt, dressed in a poor and rough habit, went barefoot, slept with a stone or a block of wood as a pillow, ate only what was necessary to stave off death, usually mixing the food with water and ashes to kill the taste, yes,



spending the greater part of the year almost without food. In addition he treated his body, which he compared to a beast of burden, severely and harshly, and that whether he was comparatively well or painfully ill, laying on double chastisement when it seemed to falter on the way."

The *History of New Mexico* by Gaspar Perez de Villagra (published at Alcalá in 1610) describes an early instance of flagellation in New Mexico. In 1598 Don Juan de Oñate led an *entrada* of gay caballeros and resolute colonists into the valley of the Rio Grande. The expedition with seven-thousand head of cattle and sheep came up from Mexico and included eighty-three teams of oxen dragging heavy *carretelas*. With them marched the brown-robed Franciscan friars, an ever-present source of spiritual strength and consolation. Don Gaspar de Villagra was a captain under Oñate, and a poet of parts. He preserved the account of the expedition in an epic poem of thirty-two cantos.

Under date of March 20, 1598 Villagra records penances practiced during Oñate's *entrada*. A prose translation reads as follows: "The night was one of prayer and penance for all. The women and children came barefoot to pray at the holy shrine. The soldiers, with cruel scourges, beat their backs unmercifully until the camp ran crimson with their blood. The humble Franciscan friars, barefoot and clothed in cruel thorny girdles, devoutly chanted their doleful hymns, praying forgiveness for their sin. Don Juan, unknown to anyone except me, went to a secluded spot where he cruelly scourged himself, mingling bitter tears with the blood which flowed from his many wounds. This continued throughout the camp till early morn."

From the time of Oñate to 1781 the padres dominated the Spanish-American settlements in the Rio Grande valley and surrounding areas. Throughout this period there are references to the practice of religious flagellation. Father Luis Valarde in his *Relacion* devotes a few lines to the ministry of a Father Kino, who from 1687 to 1711 served among the Pima Indians in southern Arizona.

Dr. Rufus Wyllys gives the following summary of Valarde's report: "He [Father Kino] seemed seldom to sleep. One night by chance one of us woke and saw him whipping himself unmercifully as a penance. He never took salt on his food, but often added to it a mixture of herbs to make it distasteful.... Although he was merciful to others, he was cruel to himself and exhausted his body in hardships."

It is now generally accepted by historians of the area that the Order Los Hermanos Penitentes, or the Penitent Brothers as it exists today, originated in the Third Order of St. Francis of the Confraternity of Penance. The Rt. Rev. J. B. Salpointe, who was bishop of Santa Fe from 1885 to 1894 gives the following summary in his book *Soldiers of the Cross*: "As regards The Third Order of St. Francis... it will not be out of the way to give here about it some details which we have extracted from one of the old manuscripts of the Cathedral. According to this document, this Order, which was known also by the name of 'La Tercera Orden de Penitencia,' was established in Santa Fe and in Santa Cruz de la Cañada, between the dates 1692 and 1695, under the administration of Governor Vargas. As it was a Franciscan institution which, by its constitution, could be governed only by priests of the order, it ceased to have a canonical existence in New Mexico when the Franciscan Fathers were succeeded by secular priests in the missions."

In March 1886 Bishop Salpointe issued a circular letter which he ordered sent to *el Hermano Mayor* [Chief Brother] of each Penitente lodge. This letter demanded that the Penitentes leave their public flagellation and return to the original laws of the Third Order of St. Francis, which had not been observed since about the date of the merging of the Third Order of St. Francis with the Aztecs.

From the above, and a mass of other data, it seems reasonable to assume that the Penitentes belonged to a descent of religious conviction medieval in origin and no longer generally practiced, at least by the laity. It survived in New Mexico



because the Spanish colonists were almost without contact with the outside world for nearly two hundred years, and also because of certain psychological characteristics of the Latin temperament.

In *The Origin and Development of Religious Belief*, S. Baring-Gould, an outstanding authority on medieval religious lore, devotes considerable space to the consideration of asceticism. He writes: "There is in mankind an instinct directing him toward self-denial and the subjugation of his fleshly lusts; the motives are an after-thought, and may be expected to vary considerably."

Baring-Gould classifies these motives thus:

1. That Deity is supposed to delight in pain, and that he must be propitiated by suffering.
2. Or, that he is so inexorably just, that man must atone by suffering for his sins, so that by undergoing punishment voluntarily in this life, he may escape suffering in the life to come.
3. Or, that matter is evil, and that therefore it is man's mission on earth to macerate his body, in order that he may disentangle his soul from the bondage of material existence.
4. Or, again, that human nature is incapable of being harmoniously developed, and that it becomes necessary for man, if he would attain elevation either above his fellow-men, or above his inferior appetites, to make choice among his faculties, select the highest, and sacrifice the others to the education of that one.

It seems to me that Baring-Gould has overlooked an important phase of the sub-

ject. There is also the motive of mystical identity with Christ by sharing the pain of his suffering and death. In fact, this motivation appears to be the dominant one among religious flagellants.

While it would not be fair to say that the Penitente order controls all the members of the Spanish-American villages of New Mexico and Colorado, the beliefs and attitudes which have made possible the perpetuation of this sect exercise a wide sphere of influence. The village people are simple, unschooled and unsophisticated. Even now they are comparatively isolated. They have changed but little through the years and are by nature intensely devout. It is against the background of a long struggle for survival in a lonely and dreary environment that New Mexican folk art came into existence. It seems to me that it is impossible to estimate the significance of the religious artistry of the Spanish-Americans of the Southwest apart from the conditions which brought it into being, the purpose for which it was intended, and the kind of people who produced it. The very integrity of these factors makes the art important and distinguishes it from all other folk art developed by foreign colonists in the Western Hemisphere.

We are confronted with the cultural dilemma of a naturally artistic, sensitive, and religious people cut off from contact with the sources of aesthetic enrichment. We cannot assume that the first colonists were exceptionally talented, and there were probably no trained artists among them. It was impossible to import art even from Mexico; the distances were too great and the hazards too numerous. Such caravans as did come through were loaded with the absolute essentials of life. It is possible that the early expeditions carried with them enough religious art for a few chapels and churches, but most of this was destroyed by the Indian revolt of 1680. It was necessary for an untrained group to supply everything required to ornament their homes and places of worship. They succeeded extraordinarily well when we consider not only their own limitations but the scarcity of satisfactory materials.





The formal line of demarcation between fine art and folk art is becoming less significant as we penetrate more deeply into the art consciousness of the human being. Whereas the academicians are sticklers for technique, the modern trend is toward the recognition of essential values. Art, to be great, must be honest. It is this honesty that makes it dynamic and important. The enlightened modern critic demands integrity in a composition. The work must in some way be purposed; it must tell the story of its time, its place, and its use, and the story must be honest.

It is not enough that a work of art should have a shallow beauty and be acceptable as a decoration. It must have a deeper beauty of meaning, and it must enrich the life of the individual brought under its influence. The New Mexican folk art has tremendous overtones. We cannot contemplate the work itself without conjuring up in our minds the barren hills, the little mud churches, the gentle, kindly people, and the hunger of soul and heart that lingers about each crude and battered fragment. Neither the subject matter nor the manner in which it is presented are of primary concern; it is the spirit shining through. The lines may be faulty and uncertain, the concept grotesque or quaintly humorous, the colors inadequate, and the anatomy impossible. In the end these limitations mean little or nothing. Through them glows a simple and devout sincerity which transforms them into works of wonder, priceless treasures, holy pictures and images, ever-present and ever-comforting.

Among modern critics there has been a general prejudice against religious art. The favorite subjects today are secular. Our museums are adorned with pictures of trees, mountains, street scenes, and the inevitable still-life studies. Unfortunately, most artists are not so successful with sunflowers as was Van Gough, but what they lack in skill they make up in industry. If still-life fails to satisfy, there are always the figure studies—a formidable array of nudes, most of them bearing witness to the scarcity of symmetrically proportioned models.



We have become so obsessed with art as social significance that we have little time left for art as spiritual significance. There is also considerable prejudice against Catholic art among non-Catholics. While this prejudice may be justified when art is used as a medium of propaganda, it cannot be applied to the religious folk art of the New Mexican villages. In this case the artisan or artist, as you may care to feel about it, was producing solely for his own consolation. He was meeting his need and not catering to any market beyond the circle of his own dry, rocky hills.

In recent years several books have appeared dealing with New Mexican folk art. These we have examined with some care, and while they are informative and respectful they seem to lack penetration. They spend considerable time and energy on the physical and technical phases of the subject, and are historical rather than psychological. Something more is necessary. The work is far more than delightful, naive, and intriguing; it is a challenge to an adventure in consciousness. It also seems that some of the historical conclusions are not entirely consistent with their premises. Statements of certainty are made which are not based upon a sufficient body of factual information. It appears certain that some of these conclusions will have to be changed or modified to meet the requirements of the facts.

It is generally assumed that the school of the *santeros* (saint makers) came into existence in the mountain villages of New Mexico about the year A. D. 1700



and continued developing and flourishing until about the year A. D. 1850. The selection of the date 1700 is somewhat arbitrary and is based upon the assumption that religious art of this type arose after the Indian uprising of 1680 had obliterated the earlier works from Spain and Mexico. I think we shall learn ultimately that the *santero* school was in existence prior to the Pueblo Rebellion. It is quite as likely that many primitive works were destroyed at this time as well as imported productions. Most of the isolated villages must have been without religious art of any importance from the time of their foundings. Just as the colonists had to make their own chairs, tables, beds, and most of their utensils from the very first, it was also a part of their nature that they should adorn their barren adobe houses with homemade images and pictures.

It is known that the Franciscan fathers did some rather creditable painting on buffalo skins prior to the Indian massacre. A number of these have survived, although most are in an advanced degree of dilapidation. Thus there was a shortage long before the Indians burned the missions.

Little is known about the New Mexican *santeros* or how the school came into existence. It appears from their work that they had little or no formal training and were recruited from the ranks of carpenters, builders, and tradesmen. There is no indication as to who the first *santero* might have been or where he functioned. Although critics are certain that there must have been a number working in different villages, only three or four names are recorded. One school of thought suggests that there were from six to ten prominent *santeros*, and another equally informed group is inclined to increase the number to about thirty. In all probability there were many more. For reason which we shall indicate later, only a small part of the *santero* art has survived, which complicates the difficulties.

The products of the *santeros* are usually called *santos*. A *santo* is a figure of a saint. There are two kinds of *santos*; the first is the *santos de retablos*—that is,

saints on tablets. These are paintings on wood resembling Russian icons. The second is *santos de bultos*, or saints in the round; small figurines carved from cottonwood, probably with a penknife, and then colored. Sometimes the *bultos* are dressed in clothes appropriate to the image intended.

There is a considerable range of subject material—all religious. The *santos de retablos* are ornamented with the likenesses of the persons of the Trinity, Christ, several forms of the Virgin Mary, and different saints and sanctified persons. The *santos de bultos* offered greater difficulties to the artists, and the range of representations is not as great.

Although there is evidence of considerable individuality in the *santo* art, it is all dominated by a quality remotely Byzantine. There is a strong feeling of intentional exaggeration and a tendency toward the grotesque. At first glance many of the *santos* are repulsive because of the morbidity of the subject matter. Many are dominated by an impression of intense suffering, but occasionally one will be found that seems to suggest a sly caricature. Larger *bultos*, especially figures of Christ, are rendered more extraordinary by being supplied with bits of long human hair. There is a stark realism about such representations which carries a terrific impact. Some of the paintings and figures, on the other hand, are charming, if not actually beautiful, and reveal a considerable degree of high artistry.

Many of the *santos de retablos* are reminiscent of the classical tradition of the medieval and early European masters. One *retablo* is in the style of Rembrandt, another is suggestive of El Greco, and still another conveys the impression of a Fra Angelico. Of course the work of the New Mexican folk artists lacks the technical excellence of the great masters, but there is a quaint similarity which reveals a considerable degree of instinctive artistry.

In costuming their figures the *santeros* exaggerated the practice common to the European schools of the 14th to the 17th centuries. When depicting ancient persons these painters mixed their styles of



dress in an astonishing and amusing disregard for authenticity. King Solomon might appear in puffed breeches and silk hose, the Virgin Mary or the Queen of Sheba might appear resplendent in a farthingale or even a mother hubbard. The concept of costuming was seasoned according to taste, and was influenced largely by the prevailing mode.

In the *Portfolio of Spanish Colonial Design in New Mexico* prepared by the Federal Art Project in 1938 there appears the following summary of the concepts dominating in Santero design: "The santeros had no training in anatomy, perspective or composition, no tricks of the trade... the result is a fantastic mixture of the intensely primitive with the baroque tradition. Theatrical gestures and grimaces of the latter are discarded for grave and static pose; features are impersonal, with an archaic serenity reminiscent of the Ilde-de-France school. Drapery is arranged in conventional folds with little regard for the anatomy beneath. As the school developed, drapery was discarded almost entirely for unbroken conical forms. Costume details retained traces of other influences, such as baroque brocade mantles, bare legs, and tunics of Roman legionnaires, Hessian uniforms including sugarloaf hats, knee breeches and skirted coats of Louis Seize, the lace collars with soft gowns and sash of Charles I, short hoop skirts and panniers of 'Grecian' masquerades at Versailles, traditional Biblical robes and friars' habits."

When we realize that all the figures represented are saints, Biblical characters, or angels, the conglomeration of costuming is fantastic, to say the least. Yet so devout is the spirit of the work that the incongruities in no way detract from the impression of sincerity.

There is seldom any attempt at scenic effects or perspective. Such decorations as surround the central figures are usually conventional representations of the symbols associated with the saint. Thus Santa Barbara may be flanked with towers, the crucified Christ with conventionalized pots of plants or vases of flowers, and beside St. Francis an altar with a skull or a graphic depiction of the

miracle of the stigmata. I have seen one *retablo* of St. Francis kneeling and receiving the stigmata, and in the place of the usual altar is an Aztec skull rack.

There is a prevailing opinion that the New Mexican *santero* used in his paintings only the mineral and vegetable colors locally available. It is supposed that he secured his knowledge of these simple pigments from the Indians, who had used them for decorative purposes from time immemorial. The colors were mixed with egg white, thinned with water, and applied to the smooth surface of a thin slab of wood. The board was first roughly adzed and then finished with a plane, or smoothed by being rubbed with sand. Pieces with knotholes or streaked with resin were usually discarded, but I have seen examples where knots were painted over. The finished wood surface was then coated with yeso, a concoction of gypsum and glue. This surface hardened and formed a permanent and practical base for the painting. After the work was finished and the figure of the saint had been lovingly colored, a coat of homemade shellack was applied, or the surface was rubbed with mutton tallow.

The *santos de bultos*, or religious figurines, were carved from soft wood, then coated with the yeso and painted and varnished like the *retablos*. Elaborate skirts and dresses were made by stretching cloth or leather over a framework of wood. The cloth was then coated in the same way, and painted like the rest of the figure. Some of the *bultos* had movable arms, hinged with leather or cloth. Occasionally elaborate figures might have movable heads or jaws; eyes of mica sometimes added a further touch of the grotesque.

In justice to the old *santeros* it should be noted that most of the general statements about their work are subject to notable exceptions. For example, while most of the *santos* were decorated with the native colors, there are certainly old ones painted in oils, although these are rare. Also there are works of the early *santeros* on canvas, cloth mounted upon wood, and leather. Whatever materials were available were used without any



arbitrary distinction.

There are a number of *retablos* in bas-relief. As the carving of such works presented difficulties almost insurmountable, the raised portions were most often built up by plaster or yeso. Good examples of this technique have unusual charm and grace.

Most of the works of the early *santeros* are unsigned, and are attributed to certain painters by details of technique and mannerisms. It would appear that the majority of the artists were illiterate or nearly so, for such inscriptions as are found are frequently misspelled or the letters incorrectly shaped.

The *santos* represent a school of art considerably more archaic than the period in which they were produced. Their appearance of antiquity is most deceptive, although there was no intent to deceive. Also they failed to reveal any consistent unfolding of style within their own school. James MacMillan, in his 15 *New Mexico Santos*, summarizes a number of valuable notes and observations: "In looking over any comprehensive collection of 'santos', either 'bultos' or 'retablos', one might expect to be able to say: 'this one is more primitive than that, and therefore must be older.' As an index to age, however, such a criterion has no meaning. As stated earlier, only a few carry dates. A few others have been examined by the Laboratory of Anthropology at Santa Fe and dated by the tree ring method. The information gathered from these sources indicates that there was practically no change in basic style during the period the art flourished. An 'off-hand' piece is likely to be due to some flight of fancy on the part of the craftsman. Fairly elaborate 'santos' may be much older than quite primitive ones."



The lack of evolutionary motion in this school of art was due in part to the lack of social evolution among the peoples by whom and for whom the work was prepared. Nothing changed rapidly among the native villages, and the variety of products was due to the diversity of abilities of the artists.

It is generally believed that the art of the *santeros* came to a rather abrupt end about the year 1850. The circumstances which so suddenly terminated this well-established school of folk art are not entirely clear. It is assumed that the coming of American merchants and traders was responsible for the decline of the indigenous crafts. Inexpensive religious prints, gaudy chromos which tickled the native fancy, were available in sufficient quantities to discourage local competition.

In the portfolio published by the Federal Art Projects (already mentioned) another phase of the matter is emphasized: "Soon after the American Occupation in 1851, the Vatican created for Santa Fe a diocese separate from Durango. Archbishop Lamy arrived and was placed in charge of all Catholics west of St. Louis, and north of El Paso. .... During his spirited reorganization of the Church, Lamy visited each parish and condemned some buildings as unfit for holding mass. The *santos* were included in his campaign against idolatry, as he likely had cause to believe that, in the eyes of his subjects, the images had come to represent virtue in themselves rather than in the abstract."

The fate of the *santos* can be further estimated by another paragraph from the same folio. "For sixty years a steadily increased flood of Americans and Europeans came into the territory, none of whom had any interest in *santos*. There were successively, trappers, soldiers, cowhands, miners, merchants, lawyers, and farmers, all endeavoring, as far as they were able, to reproduce, inside and out, towns like Springfield, Cincinnati, London, Frankfort, or Bordeaux. The next migration were health seekers, archaeologists, and artists; and only upon their advent did the *santos*—long neglected—come out of barns, store rooms, and junk





### THE ALTAR OF THE SANTUARIO OF CHIMAYO

This Santuario was completed in 1816, at which time the altar was painted by a prominent *santero* in the approved style. Prominent among the designs is the upper central symbol showing the hand of St. Francis of Assisi. This is the emblem of the Franciscan Order.

In addition to the altar, there are several other elaborately-painted shrines and numerous *bultos*, or small native-carved images. These altars are among the most ambitious productions of the native painters, but in several locations the crude but dramatic figures have now been obliterated with whitewash.





LA SANTISIMA TRINIDAD

In this *santo*, painting on wood is combined with a sculptural form accomplished by modeling raised areas in gesso. The Trinity is represented by three men as nearly identical as the artist was able to make them. Over each head is a triangular halo. The bodies grow together or are enveloped under one great cloak. The stylized bodies take on the appearance of a human skull, with two raised circles for the eyes. This type of *santo* is becoming extremely scarce.





### SAN JUAN NEPOMUCENO

This hero of the Church was drowned in the Moldau River in 1383 for refusing to reveal the secrets of the confessional to the King of Bohemia. He was canonized in 1728.

This *santo* of the Laguna school represents the saint in the garments of the canon, and carrying in his hands the palm branch of martyrdom. This branch and a crucifix are the proper attributes of San Juan Nepomuceno. The painting is in delicate colors, and probably has been copied from a European work.





### SANTIAGO

Santiago Matamoros, the killer of the Moors, was the militant patron of the early Spanish conquistadors. He is usually represented riding on a white horse, wearing a wide-brimmed hat. Santiago is St. James the Greater, and the symbols now associated with him result from his miraculous intervention at the battle of Clavijo.

This remarkable little *bulto* is suspended from the wall in the Santuario of Chimayo, a shrine which has gained considerable local distinction for the healings which have occurred there.

The little figure of Santiago, his body covered with miniature garments, jewelry, and charms, has been stolen several times, but he has always come home under mysterious circumstances.



heaps. In the elapsed time they had been broken, worm-eaten and water-rotted. They had been further spoiled by poor mending and repainting."

As the *santos* were regarded as objects of sanctity rather than as works of art, their original owners cared for them according to inclination. The edges of the *retablos* were sometimes burned with candles and the ashes used as medicine. Parts of an image might be removed and used for some special purpose. If the object grew dim or decrepit it might be retouched, refinished, or redressed. No one had the slightest inclination to preserve the original coloring or appearance for the sake of an inquiring or interested posterity. After tourists, art collectors, and dealers began buying up the *santos*, many specimens were retouched by persons unqualified by either skill or motive. Even complete forgeries appeared to gladden uninformed accumulators. The majority of *santos* are much the worse for legitimate wear or illegitimate tampering.

It seems to me that the few books now available on *santos* take for granted more than can safely be assumed without substantial evidence. For instance, efforts to sort out the paintings and figurines according to dominant characteristics and then ascribe all similar works to the same artist appears hasty. There is much to indicate that the native craftsmen, much like the great masters of Europe, maintained at least primitive workshops and that several followed a style dominant in their community or district. *Santero* art should be classified according to school, of which there are several, and not according to individuals. There are also indications that one painter employed more than one style at different periods of his life. Experimentation led to innovation, for life itself is an adventure in new uses and even new means.

There is a little family of woodcarvers now working in Cordova which might offer a notion or two for researchers investigating *santo* painting and carving. At least three generations of this family have been engaged in the same work, and all their productions are to a large

degree similar. Could not the same thing have happened in the early days? A stylization could descend from father to son and even to grandson. Dominant notes of color and design might remain much the same, and in only the smaller detail might the individuality of the different artists be revealed.

We are told that the old *santeros* worked on their religious objects through the long, cold winters which isolated the little mountain villages. No matter how you look at it, these men were professional artists, and depended on their *santos* for at least a part of their economic security. Perhaps they exchanged their *retablos* for corn, or their *bultos* for sheep, but it was all a phase of livelihood. It is now almost certain, in view of unchanging character, that these *santeros* were assisted by their entire families in the production of religious art. That is **exactly** what is happening at Cordova now, and the small town has not changed a great deal.

Even a man like Miguel Aragon, one of the few *santeros* whose name, date and style are established, certainly had relatives; quite possibly students and apprentices. On those long, cold winter days what was to hinder señora Aragon, the little Aragons, and a wider circle of *primos*, from giving the master a helping hand? All over Europe, in times almost equally primitive, workshops sprang up about famous painters. Sometimes the master added only a few final touches to the work of his pupils. The Sistine Madonna, for instance, received but passing attention from Raphael; the remainder of the work was done by his students.

We are not suggesting that the old *santeros* had formal workshops, but where demand was great and supply limited, and livelihood a consideration, it was only natural for relatives, friends, and even neighbors, to lend a helping hand. The large number of works attributed to the small group of artists now believed to have been employed in *santo* making would seem to add probability to this theory.

Is it not also possible, where several *santeros* of recognized ability were working at approximately the same time and



in the general vicinity, that they may have had friendly intercourse with each other and may even have studied together? An apprenticed painter often follows his master's style for a time before developing personal tastes of his own. We know so little of the lives of the old painters of New Mexico that it is impossible to answer these questions factually, but why should we assume that human nature here was different from that of other localities?

At any rate, there are many unsolved mysteries in connection with this local folk art, and students and critics of art equipped to examine and pass upon unsigned paintings should be consulted in these matters. The only hope of solution seems to lie in the paintings themselves, the other sources of information having run dry.

This over-painting and alleged retouching (already mentioned) have considerably complicated the situation. Some of this restoration, frequently with house paint, is late native work, but much has been done for commercial reasons. One of the worst offenders appears to have been a Mr. Fred Applegate, who not only ruined many fine old pieces but deliberately fabricated complete *retablos*. He also added dates and signatures without much respect for truth. Means of identifying his forgery and repaintings should be available to all collectors. As most of these productions are in one style and not hard to pick out, if the student is properly informed there are no serious obstacles to such a program of clarification. As a *santero* Mr. Applegate was exceedingly bad, a fact more remarkable when we learn that he was an artist of some ability.

The method of dating *santos* by the tree-ring technique may be helpful, but to my mind does not appear con-

clusive. By determining the approximate date at which wood was cut we may be able to say that a certain panel could have been painted before a certain year; but who can tell how long after the tree was felled the painting was made upon the hand-adzed slab? Most of the panels appeared to have been well-aged, so considerable time could have elapsed, and what was to prevent the use of aged wood that had been lying about for a generation? An old board could have been reclaimed from a broken wagon, refinished and sized, or a discarded painting cleaned off the wood and the panel redone. I suspect that an examination will show that some of the wood is not even local and was reclaimed from a variety of other uses by the thrifty villagers.

There are also some intriguing problems presented by the sudden termination of the *santero* folk art about 1850. It is convenient to assume that contact with the blessings of Anglo civilization explains everything; in fact, it explains little. Eye-witness accounts of conditions in and about Santa Fe from 1850 to 1875 do not support the contention that culture arrived with a crash. Assuming that religious art became more plentiful as traders brought in their wares, it still must have taken considerable time and money to replace all the old paintings and images. There were sentimental considerations as well as economic ones. An emotional, devout, and rather superstitious people, long established in their own cultural patterns, will not of their own accord cast off the past in a moment. Too, the imported prints were expensive if the Anglos had anything to do with them, at least in terms of the financial conditions of the villagers. These people were desperately poor, and it is unlikely that the merchants from Mis-





souri would be content with a simple barter system of payment.

And where are all the religious prints with which Messrs. Currier and Ives are supposed to have deluged the area. Today, less than one hundred years after their introduction, they seem to be about as scarce as the old *santos*. I have looked about quite a bit and do not see them offered for sale, or hanging in the village churches. Perhaps I have overlooked a few, but surely they are not plentiful. Undoubtedly many have been bought up, but even so, things look a little strange. The chromos now abounding are of much more recent vintage, and the paintings on tin from old Mexico are either unpleasantly recent or contemporary with the *santos*.

If the near advent of the Anglos was sufficient to destroy a folk art nearly two centuries old, why did not the Indian villages receive this mighty impact and give up their communal arts and cultures? The most likely answer yet advanced was the attitude of Archbishop Lamy, who is variously represented as blessing the works of his pious parishioners and carrying on a vigorous campaign against the local artists, using all the moral machinery of his church. He likewise attempted to curb, with little or no success, the practices of the Penitentes who were natives of these same villages, but it is an open question whether he had sufficient spiritual suasion to overthrow completely the local attitude.

Even supposing that the *santos* disappeared from the larger churches as the result of the Archbishop's disapproval, we still have to cope with the convictions of the private citizen. Father Martinez of Taos, who built a school so that his own numerous children could be educated, is a good example of the old order standing unmoved by official condemnation. It does seem strange that holy pictures which had hung in homes for generations, or were carried about the fields to protect the crops, and had been sanctified by the veneration of respected ancestors, should suddenly be tossed into the family woodpile.

And what of the die-hards, that ever-present percentage that refuses to change

or comply? There must have been some of these among the *santeros* and those who purchased their works. Old men do not change their ways because styles change. They make a religion of their own steadfastness and do as they have always done regardless of public opinion. Where is the work of these stragglers who lived on beyond their time? We need a transition period showing the confusion of the old and new to give our theories an air of verity. Where are the *retablos*, showing the Currier and Ives influence, which should mark the decline of the local technique? It is not enough to say that the art died out; it could not die out so long as its masters lived, for such are the ways of men.

And what of the *santeros* themselves? Can it be that they all died fortuitously at about the same time? They were artists. If their previous endeavors passed out of vogue why did none of them shift to secular subjects, in this way descending to the present time as a group of local artists. Did these men give up the work of their lives without an effort to survive, and settle back to raising corn and *sandias*? Natives in other groups in most parts of the primitive world have kept up their folk art, to some degree at least, even in the face of politicians and missionaries, unless the tribes themselves became extinct. Why has this not happened in New Mexico?

If the *santeros* were flourishing as late as the middle of the 19th century how does it happen that almost no information is available about them? Even if the villagers were for the most part illiterate, there should be a world of legendry. Where the written word is feeble the oral tradition is always strong. Yet scarce a half-dozen fragments of tradition are known to exist. Is this due to forgetfulness, or have modern scholars failed in thoroughness? Of some thirty painters now distinguished, the names of only three or four are known; the rest must be identified by numbers, pepper pods, and diapers. This could be explained by a constant shifting of population, but this was not the case, and there must be descendants of many of these painters living in the villages. Have



none of these folk any account of the profession of their ancestors? They have lived closely together intermarried and interbred for three hundred years, but the *santeros* who were born, lived, worked, gained reputation, raised their families, and died within an area of a hundred miles square, are totally forgotten. Possibly there should be some more discreet inquiries in these little communities.

So many modern scholars overlook this important source of information. In a district where conversation and gossip are leading occupations, there should be many old-wives tales about the distinguished citizen of long ago, or in fact, not so long ago.

If Miguel Aragon, or Jose Aragon, signed a few of their pieces, why not the rest, or at least a considerable number? If they could write at all they could have written a bit more often. In those good days when illiteracy was the prevailing fashion of the Continent, European artists frequently used some special symbol or device to identify their work. This never seems to have been a general practice in New Mexico except for some rather curious brands on the flanks of Santiago's horse. If Jose Aragon could write, how do we know that all his contemporaries lacked the ability? Was he an outstanding scholar; if so, how did he gain his proficiency? There can be no satisfactory solution to the mystery of these painters until we have a better psychological understanding of the environments and circumstances which produced them.

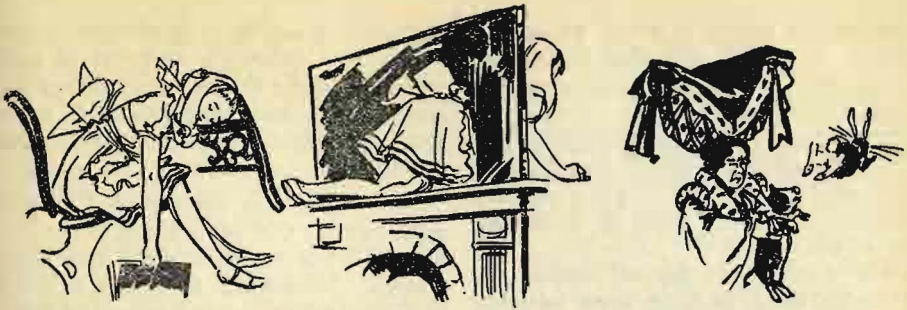
We assume that the Spanish-American villages of New Mexico dozed in the sun for centuries, with the exception of brief moments of activity due to Indian raids. In truth, the average Anglo knows almost nothing about his small world that lived its life away in the Sangre de Cristo mountains. With all our skill we have not been able to trace the threads on a simple pattern of folk art back one hundred and fifty years. What is wrong? We know more about the civilization of

ancient Egypt than we do of these little towns which are populated with the direct descendants of the men whose work we are attempting to trace.

Our difficulty may be due to the fact that we have approached a psychological problem, historically and archaeologically. *Santero* art challenges faculties of intuitive apperception not over-well developed in the average intellectual. The story of the *santos* is the story of old Spain, old Mexico, the Penitentes, neurosis, frustration, and deep currents of convictions moving beneath the surface of an isolated people. In it mingle old fears and new doubts, loneliness, and the exile of the souls from the comfort and communion of faith. It is a search for God through pain; a repentance for the sin of very existence. Man lives, therefore he suffers. Life and suffering are one—who suffers most, lives best. Only the saints can understand, for they too have known pain. Their pictures and their images are an ever-present reminder that the path of sorrow is the path to the sorrowful heart of God.

Little sins hanging heavy on the conscience, little fears grown great from long reflection, little dreams so simple and yet so hopeless of fulfillment; dim mud churches with weather-beaten crosses, dry parched graveyards—the headstones and boards falling to decay; dusty roads rutted with the tracks of solid, wooden wheels, roads that lead nowhere, or everywhere, bordered with sharp, spiked cactus; such a world as this is not for the Latin with his love of beauty, rich ceremony, gay music, and the songs of Andalusia. Close to this dry, wretched earth hearts grew tired, minds wavered in their course toward thought, hands became wrinkled and soil-stained. These gnarled, tired hands carved the little figures and painted the uncertain lines. This is the *santero* art. This is the earth of *Los Hermanos Penitentes*. Here cults of pain and art of melancholy met the common need, released the common feeling, and left to the world an artistry gentle but forlorn.





## Curiouser & Curiouser

A DEPARTMENT DEDICATED TO ALICE IN WONDERLAND

### The Kraken

In a work by James Hardie, A. M. entitled *A Dictionary of the Most Uncommon Wonders of the Works of Art and Nature* (published in New York, 1819) is to be found a description of the craken, or kraken. This article is based upon the account which appeared in *A Natural History of Norway* (published by Bishop Pontoppidan, 1752). As fiction writers occasionally refer to the kraken, and it is important in the philosophical symbolism of the primitive Nordic peoples, it seems appropriate to give the subject some attention.

Hardie describes the kraken as a kind of fish inhabiting the sea off the coast of Norway "being of a size far surpassing any other inhabitant of land or water. The fact of its existence has been called in question, for no other reason, than that of its gigantic bulk." Hardie then opines that information about the kraken should not be suppressed merely because the accounts appear incredible.

Bishop Pontoppidan describes the kraken as the largest sea monster in the world, and defines the name as meaning something large, round, flat, and full of arms or branches. "In the ocean," says the bishop, "many things are hidden. Amongst the many great things, which

are in the ocean and concealed from our eyes, or only presented to our view, for a few minutes, is the *craken*. This creature is the largest and most surprising of all the animal creation, and consequently well deserves such an account, as the nature of the thing, according to the Creator's wise ordinances will admit of... Our fishermen unanimously affirm that when they row out several miles at sea, particularly in hot weather, and by their situation, which they know by taking a view of certain points of land, expect to find 80 or 100 fathoms water, it often happens that they do not find above 20 and sometimes less. At these places they generally catch the greatest plenty of fish, and from this they judge that the craken is near at the bottom.

"They say that this creature causes the above mentioned shallows, and prevents their sounding. These the fishermen are always glad to find, as they consider them as the sure harbinger of obtaining a plentiful supply of fish for the market. There are, sometimes, twenty boats throwing out their lines, at a moderate distance from each other, and the only thing they then have to observe is whether the depth continue the same; because if they find it is becoming shallower, they



conclude the kraken is rising nearer the surface, in which case their safety requires that they should make as precipitate a retreat as possible. When they have reached the usual depth of the place, and find themselves out of danger, they lie upon their oars, and in a few minutes after see the monster come up to the surface of the water.

"He there shews himself sufficiently, to enable them to form some tolerable idea of his form, though it is more than probable, that the whole body has never been seen by any human being. Its back or upper part, which seems to be about a mile and a half in circumference, looks at first like a number of small islands, surrounded with something floating like seaweeds. Here and there, a larger rising is observed, like a sandbag, on which various kinds of small fish are seen continually leaping about; at last several bright points or horns appear, which seem to increase in magnitude, the higher they rise above the surface of the water, and sometimes they stand up as high and as large as the masts of middle sized vessels.

"It seems that these are the creature's arms, and it is supposed, that if they were to lay hold of the largest man of war, they could pull it down to the bottom. When the monster begins to descend, which he does slowly, the danger is as great as before; because the motion of his sinking causes such a swell in the sea, as to draw everything down with it, like the current of the Maelstrom...

"As this enormous sea-animal may, in all probability, be reckoned of the polype or star-fish kind, as hereafter may more fully appear, it seems, that the parts, which are seen rising, called its arms, are more properly the tentacles or feeling instruments called horns as well as arms, by which they move themselves, and, likewise, gather their food."

The bishop gives considerable additional information concerning the habits of the kraken. The animal exudes a strange excretion somewhat like that of a gigantic cuttlefish. Its diet is composed of small fish. The Reverend Mr. Friis, a minister of Bodoen in Nordland, describes a young kraken which in the year

1680 was stranded in a channel in the parish of Alstebourgh, and was of such size as to render the waterway almost impassible. It had long extended arms, some of which were twisted around nearby trees.

The kraken was not regarded as dangerous except that in its rising to the surface it might overturn ships and cause wrecks. Norwegian fishermen believed that the kraken was sometimes mistaken for a small island appearing for a short time and then vanishing mysteriously.

It is now generally believed that the kraken was some species of gigantic cuttlefish and that the legends about it were exaggerated by sailors and fishermen. It is more likely that this monster belongs to an order of mythological creatures associated with early philosophical symbolism. The sea was an ancient space symbol; it represented the ocean of universal life which generated all the forms existing in nature. The kraken, according to this conception, would be the personification or embodiment of the principle of form lurking in the sea of life. Space monsters occur in most ancient religions where they represent generation uncontrolled by the organizing power of mind. By extension, the symbolism can also imply that the kraken is the physical earth existing within the humidic depths of the world's atmosphere.

The Greek philosopher Thales describes the earth as a ship floating in a sea of ethers and generative energies. Certain of the Greeks also taught that the human soul descending into birth fell into a humid state before taking on the physical body. The early Hindus declared the earth to be supported on the shell of an immense turtle which crawled through the humid principle. Plato refers to the world-animal, indicating that cosmos was a living organism. Probably the concept of the kraken originated in this doctrine of a cosmic monster. When the old Nordic mysteries ceased to be practiced and believed, certain of the symbols passed into folklore. Later this folklore was substantiated by the discovery of strange sea creatures like the octo-



pus, the giant squid, and even some of the huge turtles.

The culture heroes of various nations nearly always battle the primordial monster. Siegfried slays the dragon, Thor the thunderer catches the Midgard serpent, which encircles the whole earth, with a hook and line, and Baal struggles with the mother-monster of the deep. In ethical symbolism, this warfare signifies the conflict between man the thinker, and the principle of form which seeks

to swallow up the intellectual powers of the human being.

Of course we have a very sketchy knowledge of the forms of life which may exist in the deeper parts of the sea. It is not impossible that some extraordinary creatures have not yet been identified. The unknown is forever fascinating. Perchance it is this very unknown, vast and incomprehensible, that is represented by the kraken.

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## The White Lady of the Hohenzollerns

Lady Bertha von Rosenberg departed from this mortal world to become a ghost in the closing years of the 15th century. She seems to have been a rather unhappy person, the victim of a cruel marriage, and for some years a widow given to a religious turn of mind. Many portraits of her are still to be seen in old Bohemian castles. She is always painted in a white widow's dress with a long white veil according to the customs of her time and race.

Lady Bertha, after she became a spirit, attached herself to the destiny of the Hohenzollern family. Whenever a Hohenzollern was in grave danger she would appear to warn him of his doom so that he might make his peace with God.

The late ex-Kaiser Wilhelm II, who has been described as the most superstitious monarch who ever sat upon the Prussian throne, forbade all members of his court to mention the legend of the White Lady. But the subject was close to the surface of Prussian thinking in the fateful year of 1914.

One night near the end of June the Palace at Potsdam was dark and silent. The only light was in the study of the Emperor, a study closely guarded by three trusty palace guards.

Midnight struck, and there was no sound from the Emperor. The condition was most unusual, for it was Kaiser Wil-

helm's unfailing custom to ring for his chocolate and cakes or perhaps a sandwich of smoked ham with pilsen beer at precisely twelve o'clock. An unheard of condition had arisen. His Majesty had forgotten his midnight meal.

One o'clock, and still no bell—one thirty, and now the guards were really worried. At last one of them decided to see if anything was wrong. He opened the door cautiously and glanced into the room. The Emperor lay unconscious on the carpet, with one hand across his face. A physician was immediately summoned, and after a few moments the Emperor was revived. This is the story which he told his astonished listeners:

At precisely midnight he rang his bell as usual. A few moments later the door opened and he heard footsteps approach him across the carpet. Without raising his head from the papers he was studying, he spoke. "Bring me..." He looked up expecting to see the butler. Instead, there stood before him a shadowy female figure dressed in white, with a long flowing veil. He rose from his chair and cried out in terror, "Who are you and what do you want?" Automatically he picked up a revolver which lay on his desk. The ghost of the White Lady retreated slowly, and finally vanished through the antichamber door without bothering to open it. As the



spirit form vanished he collapsed in a swoon, from which he was not revived until the arrival of the physician.

On two other occasions within the next few weeks the White Lady appeared. The second time it was in the long portrait gallery of the Palace, and she was carrying a large bunch of keys. As she approached the Kaiser she held out her arms as though to embrace him. He uttered a terrified cry, and when the officers and servants reached him he was on the verge of collapse.

In July of 1914 the White Lady appeared to the Kaiser while he was out hunting. This time she carried a hunting horn from which she blew terrific

blasts. The horse was so terrified by the unearthly sounds that he nearly threw his rider. It is stated that on this occasion two officers were riding with the Kaiser, and they also saw the White Lady.

As the accounts of these visitations were in circulation in 1914 and were in print the following year, it cannot be denied that the visitation of the White Lady was prophetic. The Emperor of Germany was about to begin a great war which was to destroy him and the power of his dynasty. It is astonishing that a man as superstitious as the Kaiser should not have heeded his phantom visitor and prevented the war.

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## The Story of the Newspaper

In all probability the modern newspaper originated in China back in the early days of wood block printing. At first publication was only occasional when some great and important event was circulated to the people. The Chinese papers were printed by hand from hand-carved blocks especially prepared for each edition. Later the Chinese developed movable type which speeded up their publishing and made it possible to insert last minute bits of news. As late as 1930, however, papers in both China and Tibet were still printed from the hand-cut blocks. Newspapers of various kinds have been in circulation in China for nearly a thousand years.

The daily paper came to Europe comparatively late because there were so few who could read and write. The first city in Europe to have a newspaper was Venice, and the service began in the latter part of the 15th Century. The paper was called "A Gazette" from which is derived our modern word Gazette. There are several possible meanings for this word; some trace it to Gazzera which means a "magpie" or "chattering bird." Possibly the press of that time was burdened with gossip and

small talk as are the great journals of today.

Another origin for the word is Gazette, a small coin which was the common price of the papers. Those of more classical mind suggest that the word came from the latin Gaza, a treasury of news. The Venetian Gazette was a government newspaper issued monthly and was dominated by the policies of the ruling house and the aristocracy. Soon the governments of other cities copied the Venetian plan, and Gazettes sprang up all over Europe.

The astonishing thing about the Venetian Gazette was that the government would not permit the publication of a printed newspaper. All issues had to be hand written and distributed in manuscript. This kept copyists busy until the close of the 16th Century, and as late as the 18th Century some Italian newspapers were circulated in hand-written form.

The first English newspaper is said to have been inspired by the farsightedness of Queen Elizabeth and her counselor, Lord Burleigh. The first English newspaper was printed while the Spanish Armada was in the English Channel in 1588. This journal was called *The*



*English Mercurie*, printed at London by authority of her Highness' printer. The purpose of this addition was to keep the people of England informed about the details of the war with Spain.

Queen Elizabeth felt that it was a wise policy in a moment of great anxiety and general fear to prevent the danger of false reports by publishing real information as rapidly as it could be collected. Even these papers, however, were loaded with propaganda to further the cause of Lord Burleigh and inflame hatred against the Spanish. One of them contained a letter from Madrid in which it was stated that the Spanish intended to put the Queen of England to death, and another issue described in great detail instruments of torture which the Spanish had brought with them on their ships.

*The English Mercurie* was not published regularly, appearing only upon occasion, and containing such information as the government wished to have circulated. It never contained the news

which the average citizen most desires to read. The format of this early press included religious arguments under such titles as, "Father Parson's coat well dusted." There were also violent denials of court scandals and heroic poems dedicated to her Majesty.

There were also advertisements, principally of books published by the Queen's printer, Field & Baker. Later personal columns were added, and gentle advertising solicited. Patent medicines appeared early, and prominent criminal cases were given modest showing, catering to the morbid curiosity of the public. From the beginning of its history the newspaper has been a powerful vehicle for the furtherance of the political ambitions of various partisan groups.

*Curiosities of Literature* by I. D'Israeli,  
Esq D. C. L. F. S. A. London 1838

NOTE: I D'Israeli was the father of the great English Statesman, Benjamin D'Israeli.

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## FRAGMENTS OF ANCIENT MASONRY

In his book *Freemasonry and the Ancient Gods*, J. S. M. Ward points out some interesting early fragments that he calls "Masonic phrases" in the writings of the Chinese. In the *Book of History* compiled 1200 B. C., we find this sentence: "Ye officers of the government, apply the compass." In the writings of Mencius, 372?-289 B. C. it is written, "Men should apply the square and the compass to their lives and the level and marking line besides, if they would walk in the straight and even path of wisdom."

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## IN MEMORIAM

When a chief of the Laos (a people inhabiting the region of central Indo-China) dies, it is customary to hire a number of prize fighters to engage in pugilistic encounters as part of the funeral service. These prize fighters are paid from four to twenty rupees each for the honor and privilege of developing a black eye or losing their front teeth as a permanent memento of the occasion.

See *Temples and Elephants* by Karl Bock — 1883





## In Reply

### A Department of Questions and Answers

*QUESTION: Will you explain the Eastern doctrine of karma so it can be applied in a practical way to the lives of Western persons living according to a Western concept of action.*

**ANSWER:** The peculiarly literal way in which Occidentals attempt to interpret Oriental philosophies has led to a general misunderstanding of Eastern metaphysics. Although karma is taught by a number of Western mystical and philosophical groups, the tendency is to accept the implications intellectually rather than as an experience of consciousness.

Karma is a Sanskrit word implying responsibility for action. In terms of Buddhistic philosophy, karma is the law of cause and effect as this law applies to the moral conduct of human beings. According to the teachings of Buddha, once a cause has been set in operation it is impossible to escape from the consequences of that cause. Action results in reaction, and reaction in turn becomes the cause of further action, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Action is a release of energy by the will for the accomplishment of some desired end. Moral action is the use of universal energy for the performance of a particular personal act. All action has a motive or a purpose. The moment that energy is motivated into a state of activity by a purposed impulse of the

will, this activity comes under the law of cause and effect. The power to motivate action carries with it the moral responsibility for the consequences of action.

But this is only the beginning of the philosophic implications of the law of karma. Properly understood this doctrine enriches our concept of the universal plan and its purpose. We become aware that the diversified phenomena of life, whether apparently fortunate or unfortunate, are suspended from a sphere of adequate causes. Through the contemplation of this law we gain positive assurance that we live in an honest and reasonable world which we are capable of enriching or impoverishing by our own conduct. Such a conviction does much to straighten out the apparent snarl of circumstances of which we appear to be the helpless victims.

Buddha never intended the law of karma to be interpreted as a philosophic fatalism. He taught that men conquered the world only by understanding the world. That which we understand we discover to be admirable, but that which we do not understand always seems to be an affliction. The human being is not



hopelessly imprisoned behind bars of universal law. He is a citizen of space, possessing the capacities to use or to abuse. Use brings release; abuse results in distress.

The Western mind has been deeply imbued with the concept of the forgiveness of sin. We feel that we shall achieve salvation not because of what we are or do but in spite of what we are or do. The human being is represented as a sinner by instinct and nature whose redemption must be accomplished by something greater than himself.

Eastern philosophy, in its uncorrupted and undiluted form, does not accept a doctrine of saviors even though it may appear to do so to the superficial-minded. The saviors of the East are teachers as the teachers of the West are saviors. The Eastern sage instructs his disciples in a way of attainment by the increase of personal merit. He has conceived salvation to be a science of spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical regeneration. Only those who practice this science with complete dedication to the laws governing human conduct can earn release from the disquietudes which are inevitable to those abiding in states of ignorance, superstition, and fear.

I fully realize that many Eastern religions have been corrupted and now include a variety of doctrines promising spiritual security by formulas, charms, magic, and the practice of special rituals and ceremonies. Such practices, however, are innovations introduced into faiths and philosophies such as the developed temporal ambitions of ecclesiastical hierarchies. Just as we cannot judge Western religions by the greater number of its adherents, so we cannot judge Eastern faiths by the majorities of followings.

Doctrines of personal responsibility have seldom gained large or enthusiastic followings. We prefer to cast our fortunes with cults which promise most with the least effort on our part. Therefore in both the East and the West purely ethical traditions are practiced by individuals who have the courage of a high conviction. For the rest, faith is an endless sequence of compromises, with ethical practice decreasing in the propor-

tion that the membership expands.

The laws governing the life and conduct of man are neither cruel nor arbitrary, but like the law of gravity they are inevitable. When the individual is confronted with an inevitable he has the privilege of a graceful and gracious adjustment; if there be rebellion it is not because of the law but because of his own willfulness. Natural laws are not cruel unless man forces an unpleasant situation through an attempt to violate that which by its very nature cannot be violated without incurring disaster.

To love the law and to see in its perfect workings the fulfillment of all reasonable hopes is to attain freedom under the law—there is no other freedom. We can no more be free of the plan of which we are a part than we can disobey successfully the rules governing rest, nutrition, and reproduction. If we are wise enough to recognize that we dwell in a well-ordered universe we must accept the inevitable implication that we in turn must live well-ordered lives.

Most of us are plagued by a conflict. Universal justice appears remote, and what we take to be human injustice is ever close. Overwhelmed by appearances we lose our foundations and fall into unreasonable doubts. When our sentiments are stirred by externals the clarity of our internal apperception is dimmed. In the presence of small matters we lose our grasp of large matters.

Frequently we are asked how we can explain the miserable state of humanity burdened with corrupt policies, depressed by private and public strife, and exploited by the ambitions of several kinds of despots. Can we behold these things and still have faith in a sovereign integrity at the root of our world? We must then decide whether we live by accident or intent, and whether that which we behold indicates the absence or presence of a sufficient power.

If we contemplate the existing phenomena with some perspective there is abundant evidence of an all-pervading and all-sufficient plan. If effects follow their causes in natural sequence, is the world's condition in any way inconsistent with the world's conduct? Have men striven



unceasingly and unselfishly for their common good; have they sustained righteous laws, elected noble leaders, improved their minds in essential knowledge, and deported themselves honorably and ethically? If not, is there any reason why they should dwell in security, and be wafted to heaven on flowery beds of ease? Would it not be a travesty upon any scheme of laws—human or divine—that men should come by bad means to a good end?

And what is the measure of the popular repentance? Are we sorry that we have done wrong, or merely unhappy because we have been caught? Have we resolved to correct our mistakes and devote ourselves to wiser practices, or are we merely rededicating our wits and skill to improving our condition but not ourselves? Only when the human being resolves to conduct himself in accordance with the spiritual and ethical laws suitable to his kind can he hope for the amelioration of his distress.

Is this more unkind than that a parent must correct or punish an unruly child? Certainly the delinquent juvenile does not enjoy the punishment or approve of the measures employed. His first regret is not so likely to be his misdemeanor as that he was incautious enough to get caught. He is likely to spend more time improving his technique than his conduct. Yet if a parent be foolish enough not to reprimand the child, he will in his mature years condemn the leniency that left his character without proper guidance.

Nature's only way of inspiring man to the improvement of his character is to remind him constantly, even relentlessly, of a present insufficiency. Only a small percentage of the human family is sufficiently mature in its spiritual instincts to respond to an obvious kind and loving guidance. This is proved by the persecution and dishonor which each generation reserves for those idealists who seek to improve the common lot. As long as our appetites are stronger than our aspirations we require a firm hand.

But karma does not apply merely to society as a whole. It operates in the light of each individual, conferring upon

everyone that which is his due. This is no cause for grief; it is an eternal invitation to grow. Perhaps the invitation is a little more insistent than we can enjoy, but the eternal realities impel us eternally toward themselves.

Although most Eastern mystics explain their present state by reference to past lives, it is seldom necessary to go beyond this one life to discover adequate reasons for our present disturbances.

It may be that destiny has placed us in an unfortunate situation, but destiny does not require that we remain there indefinitely. The mistakes of the past may weigh heavily upon us, but we gain nothing by adding new delinquencies to those already accumulated.

Karma operates through conduct patterns just as surely as the law of cause and effect dictates the policies of space. During adversity good men do not depart from their principles. If old debts must be paid we have the right to pay them graciously. By this very action they cease to be debts and become opportunities.

The simplest statement of the formula of karma in the problems of daily living is that we may expect to receive in proportion to that which we give. If we live for ourselves we shall live by ourselves. If we dislike we shall be disliked. If we are unkind we shall be the victims of unkindness. If we are stupid we shall be the recipients of stupidity. If we resolve to accomplish our own ends at all costs we must not forget that we shall be presented with a bill for costs. Those who suspect will be suspected; those who gossip will be subjects of a general conversation; those who bring tales will carry tales; those who receive them will start new ones. If we neglect we shall be neglected, and whatever we strive after unduly we must endure once it is secured.

If that which we have done returns to us in full measure, pressed down and running over, who is to blame? Is it the heavens that roll impotently on, or a neighbor, or our congressman? Should we be amazed, disturbed, discomfited, and outraged because that which is our own returns to us like a calf galloping back to its mother?



Every day folk come to me and tell me of their troubles, completely unaware that their principal trouble is themselves. They are unhappy and the bottom is out of the universe. Life is a dreary struggle against overwhelming odds, and they are all cinderellas persecuted by a wicked stepmother and jealous sisters. Sometimes it is difficult to understand how they can forget so completely their own mistakes and at the same time remember the smallest detail of the mistakes of others.

Karma is not only a means of accomplishing retribution; it is also an instrument of a more happy compensation. Right action brings with it a sequence of appropriate consequences. Good deeds as well as bad ones return to their makers. If it appears that there is more of misery than there is of happiness in the world it is because selfishness dominates in the conduct patterns of most people.

In order for karma to operate honestly in the affairs of mortals it is evident that the happiness and security of one man cannot be in the keeping of another. As we have no right to attempt to dominate those about us, it is equally true that they have no right to dominate us, either for good or ill. The operation of karma reveals that the security of an individual depends entirely upon that individual, regardless of appearances to the contrary.

We are miserable not because of what others do to us but because we lack the integrity to retain our own equilibrium under external pressure. Our weaknesses and insufficiencies are our own, and these inadequacies and not the pressure of the world are responsible for our agitation. When we depend upon others for that which is essentially our own responsibility we are in an exceedingly vulnerable position. The more we depend upon outside strength the weaker we become as persons. There is no permanent security in a state of affairs under which happiness is possible to us only when our every whim is catered to and our every responsibility shifted onto apparently broader shoulders. Yet to serve no one and to be served by everyone is to most of us a proper description of the nirvanic state.

One chap came to me to tell the sad story of his life. Nothing had ever gone right. Someone else had the job he wanted; he was not appreciated at home; he was misunderstood by his family and undervalued by his world. Under gentle pressure he acknowledged that there might be some slight imperfection in his character, but these were accidentals. All together, he modestly admitted himself to be well above the average in the requirements for successful living. But he had dedicated himself to philosophy, and to meet his fate stoically he would be brave under adversity, and bend his back to the load without a whimper—he was paying off old karma. He must have been quite a character five lives back.

With a person like this the belief in karma adds new glamour to the old complex of martyrdom. Suffering for our fifth life back is almost as satisfactory as suffering for a total stranger. We can work up that same warm, satisfying self-pity when we think that we are paying off the debts of some swash-buckling cavalier who went to his grave unrepentant. He had his good time, and now we suffer and suffer and have a satisfactory explanation for being decidedly inconclusive in our present conduct.

Today we are such noble little fellows, but our nobility is mortgaged. If we must acknowledge faults, at least they are remote; the causes are long dead; only the misery lingers on. While it may be true that in certain particulars our present lives are the results of previous conduct, very few of us make any really intelligent effort to pay old bills or prevent the accumulation of new ones. That minority group that does set to work systematically and conscientiously to straighten things out observes an almost immediate improvement in its state. The moment we improve our standard of internal living, things about us seem to alter their complexions. We discover that life is reasonably satisfactory for those who conduct themselves in a reasonably satisfactory way. The main thing is not to develop delusions of grandeur about our own innate importance and



expect the world to cater to our irascibilities.

In the teachings of Buddha, human life is represented by a wheel turning on the axis of karma, or destiny. We do not establish cosmic credit merely by an endless process of paying bills. There is another dimension involved in the operation of natural law. Solution lies in the attainment of a state of transcendent consciousness. We can never escape from this world except by outgrowing the worldliness in ourselves, nor can we hope to solve the dilemma by creating a nirvanic state upon the earth, for the kingdom of heaven is not of this world.

Stupidity, ignorance, lust, and fear bind the human being to the wheel of the law. Until these inadequacies are overcome all apparent security is an illusion which vanishes the moment it is tested. We can never be happy in spite of what we are. Happiness is a by-product of the harmonious adjustment of the individual to the universal plan. Until he desires happiness so intensely that he is willing to make this adjustment at the expense of every other consideration, his material condition will remain unsatisfactory.

The philosophical disciplines of Buddhism lead the consciousness naturally and easily away from unreasonable attachments and toward internal tranquility. This quietude is not the result of conflict or the power of will over desire. We do not have to combat any thought or emotion which we have actually outgrown. We do not have to *try* to be virtuous at the expense of our normal inclinations. No one has to be converted to something that he has already experienced and knows to be a fact. As the Self gains victory over the not-self there is an inevitable integration of the personality. This manifests through a growing realization of the splendid rightness of the universal plan as it operates through collectives and individuals.

The Neoplatonists described spiritual realization as the victory of the Self over circumstances. Every creature must be either victor or victim. It does not necessarily follow that this victory can be complete at this time. Growth is a

series of victories, and decay is a series of defeats. Living is either a process of ripening or a process of rotting. Any effort to compromise ends in confusion.

Western philosophy places great emphasis upon the individual and the possibilities that he may ultimately become master of creation. Man is conceived of as an infant Hercules, the natural and inevitable master of the material sphere. Growth is a process of plowing through obstacles with little regard for the rights of those obstacles. We must succeed regardless of others who fail. We regret failure for others, but acknowledge that the many must be sacrificed to the requirements of the few. Our main concern is to be of the few, and we resent it mightily if we suddenly discover that we are one of the many.

A concept of ends determines the uses of means. If the legitimate end of man is a temporal rulership over creation, such an end justifies the highly competitive means by which we seek to attain it. Such a concept must inevitably include a highly exaggerated conviction about the significance of one's self. We see ourselves as potential autocrats with unlimited ambitions but limited means of accomplishing them. This in itself builds up resentments and impoverishes our lives through a sense of frustration.

Eastern philosophy is built on a different concept. Growth is a process of adjustment to everexisting facts. The individual finds security through obedience rather than rebellion. Orientalists have been called negative because they reject a doctrine of self-aggrandizement. The only worlds they want to conquer are the spheres of worldliness within themselves. They seek freedom, not bondage. No one can be free who is the servant of his ambitions, appetites, and conceits. Even if these are gratified fully and completely there is no escape from the tyranny of one's own desires.

If, however, the individual through an enlargement of consciousness gains awareness of the dimensions of the illusion, he finds that birth and death and destiny are part of the dream. We live because we want to live; we die because we fear to die; we are plagued with the



consequences of action because we know inwardly that we deserve to be so plagued. Karma operates because justice is within ourselves. Buddha taught that through realization we escape from the wheel. Ignorance cannot hold the wise man; indifferent to pain and pleasure, he is fitted for immortality. While we believe in wrong we will wrong others and be wronged ourselves, but if we discover right we cut the complicated knot with the sword of quick discernment. Thus karma ends in the perfect enlightenment. We are forever free from that which has lost the power we gave it to injure, burden, or afflict.

We suffer not because others injure us but because we are no wiser than our enemies. We cannot injure that which is superior to ourselves in essential knowledge. We are hurt when the smallness in us is afflicted by the smallness in others. We are no better than the man who can hurt us.

Diogenes was told one day that a certain tyrant was resolved to destroy him. The old philosopher laughed, declaring that the threat meant nothing because the tyrant could threaten also bugs, worms, and rodents. "If the great man wishes to discomfort me" remarked Diogenes, "there is a much simpler way. Let him threaten to live well without me."

If Western nations could apply such Eastern laws as reincarnation and karma to the conduct of their affairs many prob-

lems could be solved which now appear beyond solution. We would have an all-sufficient reason to work together in order that we might enjoy the natural consequences of right action. We would also have an adequate motive for individual integrity, and would appreciate how completely our security depends upon ourselves. In nature we are entitled to anything that we earn, and as John Burroughs said, in substance, that which is our own shall know our face.

This does not mean that we need to sit about under trees, meditating upon abstractions. All we need to do is to believe in an honest universe, and live accordingly. The truly enlightened person will practice enlightenment in his daily works. He is justified by his works and not his words. We are not wise because we mumble from memory the words of wise men, or claim an admiration for noble things. We are wiser than the stupid people who seek to hurt and burden us when we have attained an internal security which understands all things and cannot, by its very nature, receive an injury.

The law of karma is therefore a release from its own implications. It bears witness to a plan so magnificent that when properly comprehended all doubt vanishes in certainty, all fear ceases in security, and all selfishness is transmuted by the simple realization that a successful and satisfying selfishness is impossible in the universe.

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### THE THREE VINEGAR TASTERS

Three luminous figures of wise and ancient men stand around a jar with a beautiful pale blue glaze. Each dips his fingers into the jar, and tastes of the Brew of Life. The first makes a wry face; the second is calm and indifferent, and the third is delighted with the flavor. According to the Chinese legend, the vinegar tasters are Buddha, Confucius, and Lao-tze. Buddha finds life bitter, Confucius finds it sour, and Lao-tse pronounces it sweet, whether it be so or not.

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On an old Chinese metal mirror appeared these words: "Man combs his hair every morning, why not his heart?"





## Philosophy of Music

**M**USIC must be approached with the same deep and generous spirit that is required in the examination of religion in its relationship to religious systems. We must discover the large unity or inclusiveness before attempting to estimate details and particulars. Unless we can escape from the natural inclination to judge values in terms of the familiar, we can never appreciate the power and influence of the arts in the life and growth of the human being.

The primary purpose of an art is to interpret. It seeks to convey an impression by which we share with the artist some conviction or ideal as the result of an emotional impact. Art appeals primarily to the emotions in the same way that sciences and philosophy appeal to the intellect and the faculties of the mind. With the passing of time, however, the boundaries between the arts and the boundary between art and the intellectual sphere have become progressively less distinct. Art, for example, is no longer a mere expression of emotional content. It has been subjected to a process of organization, and the artist is disciplined by a variety of techniques cal-

culated to restrict and directionalize artistic endeavor and cause it to conform with dominant traditional form.

Most arts are twofold in their implication; that is, they are both creative and interpretive. The creative phase of art involves the element of originality, whereas the interpretive phase is an attempt to convey artistic impulse across the interval between the creating individual and the receptive public mind.

The most intellectual of the arts is painting, because it permits the unfolding of an emotional impulse through familiar forms which can be grouped and arranged either to tell a complete story or to emphasize some fact, circumstance, or incident. The painter cannot escape entirely from the limitations of the three-dimensional world, which he must confine within the limitations of a two-dimensional surface. Without realizing the true facts, he is an idealistic copyist deriving his inspiration from the forms about him in nature. He is forever manipulating these forms in an effort to convey aesthetic overtones. Modernism in art is largely a rebellion against the limitations of a media belonging to the



phenomenal rather than the noumenal world. The tendency is to defy literalism, to intentionally distort as a gesture of emancipation. The painter cannot produce forms more perfect than those which exist in the universe about him, and in an effort to express creative urge he violates the canons imposed by the spheres of life from which he must derive the formal structure of his symbols.

Music is the least intellectual of the arts, because it escapes from dimensional-form symbols to nondimensional-sound symbols. The intellect is incapable of applying to sound the critical processes which are stimulated into action by painting, sculpturing, and even poetry. Music stimulates reactions without directing the attention toward some formal conclusion. The listener enjoys without being instructed as to the dimensions or proportions of that enjoyment. He has greater freedom and feels a greater intimacy. Music has a meaning for him; it fits into his moods without any compromise of its own integrity. Like water it adapts itself instantly to the shape of its container. In a square vessel, it is square; in a circular vessel it is circular. This is true because of the nature of the element itself, and not because it is catering to the shape of the jug, the vase, or the bowl.

The universality of music and its importance in the life of man is in many ways analogous to water. It may exist in countless forms and several states. It nourishes and sustains many kinds of internal life. It nourishes religions, philosophies, and sciences, without being identical with any of them. Like beauty it is forever ministering, enriching, and expanding the potentials of human consciousness. It is important that all students of philosophy and comparative religion should appreciate the spiritualizing force of great music. It is equally valuable to consider the development of music consciousness and music appreciation through the ages and among the different civilizations which have been enriched by its gentle and gracious persuasion.

We must learn to appreciate the difference between music and noise, but over-

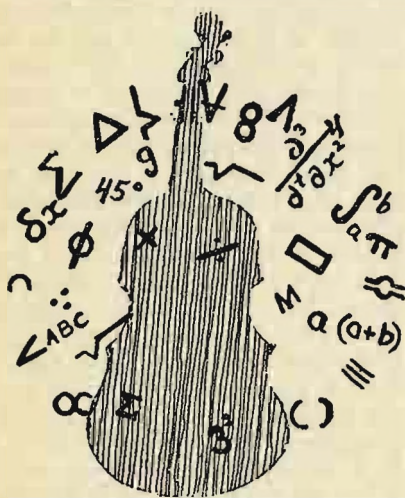
come the tendency to consider unfamiliar musical forms as merely untutored sounds. While musical impulses are common to all mankind, musical forms divide into familiar and unfamiliar. As we have difficulty in understanding persons whose ways of life are different from our own, so we have difficulty in recognizing and responding to the arts of peoples psychologically remote. The final measure is sincerity, not proximity, but until we have experienced some kind of social communion with a larger world of human aspirations this communion is comparatively impossible. As psychological sympathy develops we gain the possibility of measuring arts and art values in terms of basic integrity rather than by the false standards of personal taste.

A certain group of modern American and European musicologists refer to music as the youngest and most spiritual of the arts. Figuring from the premise that the most recent in time by this fact alone must be acknowledged as the highest in quality, they feel that the modern concept of musical form and technique reveals exalted dimensions of consciousness beyond the experience of antiquity. Unfortunately, we cannot measure the progress of human culture by mere reference to chronology. If the most recent must be the best, it might infer that the evolutionary process within music itself is consummated in the jukebox, a contention open to reasonable doubts. Music per se, like the human being per se, is unhistorical. Musical forms have unfolded over long periods of time, and there is no ground upon which to deny the attainments and achievements of the great composers and interpreters who have enriched the European tradition. What we want to stress is the parallel significance of the non-European forms, either ancient or recent. We want to consider music as a whole, and when we do so it is no longer the youngest of the arts but one of the oldest. We must get over the idea that China is deficient or backward musically because it did not produce a Johann Sebastian Bach, or that the Greeks and Egyptians were less musical than ourselves because they were



comparatively ignorant of the precious potentialities of the diatonic scale.

Ancient music was not form conscious, nor did it become involved in the tendency to exhibitionism so commonly expressed in modern works. The performer was not conditioned by critics hypersensitive to technique and practically immune to content. He was not attempting to be brilliant, and his future, economic and artistic, did not depend upon the dispositions, preferences, and antipathies of the music critics of the *New York Times*. While it is true that in all ages a certain genius or predisposition is essential to outstanding accomplishment, music originated in the simple desire to express conviction through melody, harmony, or rhythm. Today the natural inclinations are subjected to an intensive cultivation. This may enrich the performer but does not always enrich the performance. We are so trained to judge merit on the basis of competitive technical excellence that we lose sight of the true end in a maze of means.





But a growl presented a new dimension of bear. It was a sound of fear. It struck against something within ourselves that was completely unhistorical. It stirred up emotions and reactions far more vivid and vital than word-forms. The word for bear belonged to the world of mind, but the sound for bear stirred up deep mysterious apprehensions that had no shape but disturbed internal calmness.

The primitive world is never still. All its noises flow together into an endless sound. We are becoming more aware of this every day in the life of great cities. Twenty-four hours of the day there is motion, and motion naturally leads to sound. The taxicabs, streetcars, subways elevated trains, and the teeming industry of human beings mingle in a sea of sound in which we live and move and have our being. Consciously we soon lose awareness of this endless hum, but in our subconscious the rhythms are a powerful force in conditioning our lives.

The sounds which primitive man received into himself naturally came out again, conditioned by the qualities of his own expressive mechanism. As sounds had created moods within him, so they became the natural and normal way for him to express his own moods or convey them to others. Finding that he could not convey an emotion by describing it in words, he attempted to transfer it as an experience. Music, the dance, pantomime, and the theater were the arts most suitable for this transference.

There is certainly a human instinct to escape through sound. Even now, persons entirely alone will sing because through their ears they can reabsorb their own sound. They are like the man who talks himself into an attitude or out of one. Once the words are formulated and expressed they are capable of being absorbed by the mind. Word or sound becomes a symbolic medium between emotion and thought or between thought and emotion. Feeling that we should not perform a certain action, we say audibly, "I should not do this." The mind picking up the words finds them much more impressive and significant than the

unspoken impulse. The mind is used to being conditioned by words, and is as susceptible to our own as to those of a stranger.

We can also go about the house humming an old familiar tune. Perhaps the instinct to hum is in some way autocorrective for a mood or an attitude, or a direct expression of our feeling at the moment. Our own vocal production strikes upon our eardrums simply as a melody and produces an effect because all sound produces an effect, and that effect is not possible until the impulse is expressed as a sound. Thinking about it and feeling it silently is not equivalent, for the sound vibrations have not been set in motion.

The books of ancient peoples and the various carvings, paintings, and figures that have descended to us from antiquity include a representation of a number of musical instruments. These include wind instruments, trumpets, flutes, and horns of various kinds, stringed instruments, harps, lutes, and lyres; in India, the vina, and throughout Asia types of mandolins and guitars, percussion instruments, rattle, and bells. Musicians, jugglers, and acrobats, entertaining the Greeks at their banquets, are depicted on Egyptian frescoes and referred to in the ancient writings of China and India. It was inevitable that the ear, which is the final criterion of acceptable sounds, should instinctively set up a general censorship and lead to simple rules governing artistic performance.

From the earliest times music has been associated intimately with religion and the elaborate rituals of the temple rites and ceremonies. The emotional and mystical content of worship and veneration found natural expression in simple musical forms. One of the commonest and most primitive of these forms is the chant. Here the sound and the intellectual content are combined to produce an internal state of reverence, and to communicate this state through the congregation. Man early realized that the spiritual content of religion could not be captured in discourse alone. It was necessary to create a mood and also to bind various opinions by a common denomina-



tor that was not itself a party of opinion. The solemnity of church music was an effort to convey the sublime implications of human communion in the presence of a God-power. It was not appropriate that such music should agitate the more human emotions, or stimulate objectivity by its tempo. Hence, the solemn dignity of the Gregorian chants which echoed through the vaulted cathedrals calling men to participate in a sacrament of awe and wonder.

The Greeks developed the concept of musical modes suitable to different occasions and devised to advance the causes or purposes of these occasions. Thus there were compositions suitable to the celebration of heroes, feast days, private and public gatherings, love songs, and songs of war, hymns of birth, and melodies appropriate to the burial of the dead. These modes were also used to distinguish the works of the various orders of divinities in order that the worshiper might experience the qualities of the gods within himself. Recognizing the power of music, the more enlightened ancient nations enacted certain laws and legislation intended to prevent the misuse or perversion of the musical forms. Celebrated composers were exiled by the court of Athens, because their musical compositions were pronounced to be demoralizing or led to some unnatural or unreasonable display of emotion.

While it is not certain that the Greeks were the first to set up a science of harmonics they are generally credited with this invention, as our knowledge of music forms and history in Asia is still extremely limited. At that time when philosophy dominated the culture of the Grecian state, it was natural, in fact inevitable, that music should be philosophized and fitted into the general concept of life. In these modern times when philosophical considerations are almost completely ignored in the world of the arts, it may be helpful to restore the broad outline of the Grecian concept.

It is hard for us to estimate the true vitality of Grecian philosophy from our present arbitrary definition of the meaning of the word itself. We think of philosophers as involved intellectuals trying

to capture the universe by cold processes of logic and reason. We like to envision these classical academicians as sitting around pondering the quadrature of the circle, and reducing the infinite diversity of nature to a series of categories. We should know much better, but moderns have never been inclined to suspect ancients of superiority.

The Athenian states produced very few neurotics. Life was simple, natural, and unburdened by the pressures which weigh so heavily upon the citizens of the 20th century. This does not mean that the Greeks did not have their troubles, but they had few preconceptions about what was required of greatness. They lived much as they pleased and were glad of it; if others did not approve, it was of small consequence. Each man was the custodian of his own conduct and, unless his actions were detrimental to the collective, no one was much perturbed.

Socrates was not a good singer but he sang and dared the world to object. Though his bodily structure was in no way reminiscent of Nijinski, he loved to go out in the early morning and lead his disciples in symbolic dance. He might look ridiculous, but he felt sublime, and his disciples were too busy trying to feel some of the sublimity to pay much attention to the master's antics. Most of them would have been very happy to have looked like Socrates if they could also have shared his wisdom.

Plato danced with his disciples; so did Pythagoras, and according to the Logia, Jesus danced with his apostles at the Last Supper. In those days mathematicians composed poetry, philosophers carved statues of the graces, and the gods themselves spoke through their oracles in hexameter verse. Even dour old Aristotle, who seems to have suffered from chronic intellectual dyspepsia, was not above twanging the lute.

It would be something worth seeing if we could be present when a group of our distinguished nuclear physicists went forth to meet the dawn with lyre and flute and cymbal, and postured about the campus according to the impulses of the Terpsichorean muse. The gentlemen



would undoubtedly be pronounced insane, but the rest of us might be living in a much safer world if scientists still revered and practiced the arts.

Philosophy put on the somber garment of intellectual boredom when the spirit of gladness failed in the hearts of men. Along the way men gradually lost sight of the goodness of life as it was, and developing a general dissatisfaction decided that they would never be happy until they fashioned it anew according to their own opinions. They fixed their attention upon some distant future and lost sight entirely of the dynamic potentials of the passing hour itself. The Greeks made no mistake. Aristippus taught that the fullness of wisdom was to do exactly what you wanted to do, and then use philosophy to prove that you were right.

The Skeptics were cautious about believing anything lest they must later acknowledge themselves to be wrong. The Cynics found a general benightedness of all men exceedingly comforting and practiced it themselves with a vast amount of enthusiasm. A dozen cults with as many different notions dwelt in the same fair city in a condition of constant good-natured indignation over the foibles of each other. They had discovered that there was no particular good to be obtained by mutual agreement. It was much more fun to sharpen the wits by perpetuating these philosophical feuds as long as everyone remained too wise to be offended and too enlightened to descend to petty jealousy. After all, thinking can be fun, especially if you do not take your own thoughts too seriously.

In its time Athens was the most beautiful city of the world. Its glory bore witness to the taste of its peoples. All the arts of antiquity contributed to a grandeur that has influenced the culture of every succeeding nation. Art is not the product of dry wit or of minds devoted to the sovereign dictates of utility. It does not flourish in coldly-intellectual communities or in fanatical groups afraid that happiness will corrupt the immortal soul. Most moderns are afraid of Plato's *Dialogues* because they have never read them. We scarcely open the convenient popular-priced reprint before we

discover a wealth of homely wisdom, brilliant wit, and an entirely delightful human nature. No one can read the accounts of Socrates attending the banquet and discoursing with the fellow guests until one by one they collapsed from advanced inebriation without an honest chuckle. At last old Socrates was alone. He out drank them all, and went home in fine fettle in time to start work for the day.

The Greek concept of the universe may have been somewhat limited when compared with present standards, but it was rich and deep and wise, speaking psychologically. Broad concepts were evolved and to posterity would bequeath the privilege of filling in the details. It has been pointed out that Plato never did know how many teeth there were in the human head, but he was certain there were just enough until man neglected them. Thales, Anaximander, and Anaxamenes, outstanding geographers and cosmologists, knew practically nothing of any lands extending far from the shores of the Mediterranean. They were satisfied to live well where they were on the assumption that they could then live well somewhere else, if other places existed. We have discovered a number of new continents and are not able to live well in any of them. Which then is the wiser?

The natural tendency of the Grecians toward the glorification of mathematics caused them to interpret most natural phenomena according to formulas of arithmetic or geometry. "God geometrizes," said Plato, and in his academy it was required that all students should have a solid acquaintance with mathematics, astronomy, and music. He followed the Pythagorean persuasion that music was one of the essential forms of learning, indispensable to the successful development of the human personality. Music consisted of theory and practice. The theory of music was mathematical; the practice of music was philosophical. For a man to become a judge, a statesman, a doctor, or even a successful shopkeeper or farmer without knowledge and appreciation of music was little short of a catastrophe. The civilizing power of



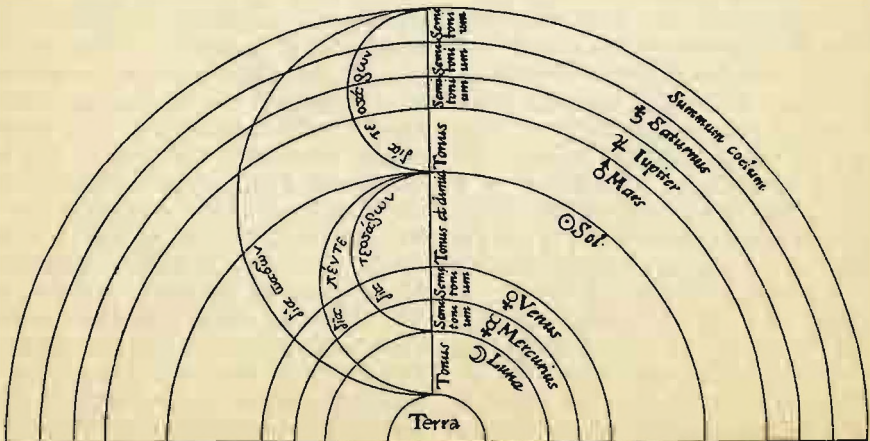
music, as described in the Orphic symbolism, charmed the beast, preserved the soul from all manner of injury, and even softened the heart of the god of the dead. To live without music is to die without peace, but to be enriched by its gentle persuasions is to find God and beauty everywhere. Only the heart that knows the beautiful, the hand that serves the good, and the mind that has contemplated the nature of the one Supreme Cause can be united to the advancement of the human estate.

It was the belief of the Platonists that Pythagoras was the first man to hear the 'music of the spheres.' The details have not survived, and we are inclined to suspect that the statement implies that Pythagoras experienced within his own consciousness the harmony of the world. It would be useless to proceed in this outline without digressing sufficiently to examine the fuller meaning of this concept. The 'music of the spheres' is the song of space, a sublime statement of the joy of the universe, all parts of which unite like the voices of an immense chorus hymning its creator. Here are the gods who dance, who write poems on stones, and sing the blossoming of flowers. Here is a world in which nothing actually is wrong. The song is there; the defect is in the ears of men. The beauty is there, but there are none so blind as those who will not see. The motion is there, but mortals and their

small pride stamp their way through their careers oblivious to the rhythms flowing around them and through them.

The concept of a good world has been so completely lost that we are now conceited enough to think that it can never be good until we have reorganized it. We are so hypnotized by the consequences of our own mistakes that we even forget that we have made them; and we blame the heavens for our own defects and shake our fists impotently at the stars. The Greeks made their mistakes but they cheerfully acknowledged them and kept on knowing in their hearts that they were part of a vast incorruptible integrity. The seasons that roll by, the stars in their courses, the seeds that grow out of the earth, the wonder of the generation of the human being, and the still greater wonder of the birth of the mind by which man can come to understand himself; all these things were so beautiful and so good that there was little cause for legitimate complaint.

Modern musicologists tell us that the mathematical intervals represented by the orbits of the planets as we know these intervals astronomically in no way conform with the Pythagorean concept of the *monochordum mundi*. This is the philosophic monochord, the single string attached above to the sphere of the fixed stars and below to the surface of the physical earth. This hypothetical thread ex-



THE MUNDANE MONOCHORD, ACCORDING TO THE PYTHAGOREANS



tends through the orbits of all the planets, and the orbital circles are represented on the cord by frets. These frets break the cord into a series of parts which have ratios to the entire length of the cord and to each other.

The accompanying figure from Stanley's *History of Philosophy* illustrates the idea of the mundane monochord. The intervals between the orbits of the planets are represented as tones and semitones or a combination thereof. The Pythagoreans taught that the universal harmony resulted from the consonances of these intervals. The planets themselves did not actually give forth sounds, rather their motion agitated the vital substance of space, which reverberated according to the qualities of the several intervals. As the tuning fork when struck will convey its vibrations to another fork with the same pitch, the universal tones and semitones communicate their agitation from one sphere of substance to another, so that the various atmospheres of the world are constantly vibrant with combinations of universal sound.

Ancient musical instruments were nearly always designed to represent in some way the proportions of the mundane sphere. In his book *The Vision of Asia*, L. Cranmer-Byng points out that the ch'in or Chinese table lute measured 3'66 feet because the year contains a maximum of 366 days. The number of the strings was five to agree with the five elements. The upper part was made round to represent the firmament. The bottom was flat to represent the ground, and the thirteen studs stood for the twelve moons and the intercalary moon. Music, therefore, became intimately associated with cosmology, mathematics, religion, and religious symbolism.

The reader must bear in mind that a discussion of Greek philosophical music deals with elements and factors entirely outside of modern scientific concepts of sound. The conclusions must be estimated entirely in the light of the ancient beliefs of the nature and structure of the world and not according to the attitudes and opinions which prevail in modern time.

The universe of the Pythagoreans and

Platonists consisted of three spheres or states of being: the celestial, the sidereal, and the elemental. In symbolism the celestial sphere was associated with the region of the fixed stars, and extended upward from this region toward the substance of Deity. The sidereal sphere, regarded as intermediate, contained the orbits of the seven planets known to antiquity. The elemental sphere was composed of the four elements in a descending order of fire, air, water, and earth. In some systems the order of fire and air was reversed. The celestial sphere was spiritual, luminous, and causal. The sidereal sphere was intellectual or formal, and here light and darkness existed in a state of equilibrium. The elemental sphere was material, possessed the quality of capacity, and was by nature dark and obscure.

The monochord, therefore, extended downward from the very essences of Deity, through the three spheres, and terminated in the most solid state of matter. Within each of the three spheres there was a gradation of quality from highest to lowest and these gradations were in sympathetic relationship with the corresponding levels of the other spheres. For example, the second level of the celestial sphere was sympathetic to the second level of the sidereal sphere and both of these were in sympathy with the second level of the elemental sphere.

In addition to these direct sympathies there were also concordances of intervals of which the ancients recognized particularly the intervals of the third, the fifth, and the octave. It was also their opinion that whereas superiors agitate inferiors, thus creating sounds, inferiors were not able to agitate superiors. Therefore, the elemental sphere, like a musical instrument, could be played upon but possessed no intrinsic power to create sound. The string of the symbolical monochord was universal substance diffused throughout all the spheres of the world. Thus the celestial sphere is the musician; the sidereal sphere, a middle air by which the gradations of sound are possible, and the elemental sphere is the material, musical instrument, which by its shape and composition determines tonal quality.







its upper end life and motion, and closes the various stops proportionately distributed downward producing high or low tones at will."

Fludd also makes the interesting observation that the minor key requires less intensity than the major and in each sphere is developed first. Most primitive music and the natural sounds of the world are in the minor, because the creatures inhabiting the lower planes of life have not the spiritual intensity to produce or respond to the major key. Also the more dense the medium through which the sound vibrations must pass, the greater resistance there is to their purity. Thus tone is diminished and diffused slowly. The more attenuated the medium, the higher and more noble the consonances of the music. Thus sound increases in purity as it ascends toward the sphere of God.

Basing his reflections upon the doctrines of Pythagoras and the interpretation thereof by Jerome Cardan, Dr. Fludd concludes that sound is the result of a proportion of light and darkness. Absolute light is silent and so is absolute darkness, which is total absence of light. Thus pure spirit and pure matter were regarded by the ancients as without sound. All proportions of light and darkness are called formal; that is, they result in a knowable, conceivable, or perceivable compound. A form must have certain limitations, dimensions, and proportions, and must exist in time and place. As all compounds are in constant internal motion, they produce a natural music. Motion may be toward center in the process of integration or away from center in the process of disintegration. Each of these motions has its inevitable sounds. While forms endure they are in constant stress, the light and dark principles seeking to scape to their own levels or inevitable conditions.

The highest of all forms are the gods, in whose composition light predominates and whose bodies consist of the least possible degree of form. In their compositions, therefore, the music of life is almost pure and entirely beyond the human auditory range. Gross bodies in which solidity and density predominate,

such as minerals and the material forms of plants, animals, and men, obstruct the universal harmony so that the tones are low, heavy, and even dissonant.

In the cosmological concept of universal harmony, the sun occupies the exact center of the string of the world monochord. Being itself in the middle of the sidereal sphere, which is the middle sphere, it is exactly halfway between the extremes of spirit and matter. In all parts of the world below the orbit of the sun, darkness to some degree exceeds light in quantity, whereas above the orbit of the sun, light in some degree exceeds darkness in quantity. In the composition of man the sun corresponds to the orbit of the mind. Thus the intellect is the least degree of darkness in the world of form. That which is below the mind verges toward the material; that which is above the mind verges toward the spiritual. The sun in consequence of its position emits a sound by its own nature eternal, for there is no predominance of extremes. If spirit predominates form and is not held by the formal principle, the sound will escape to the divine silence. If form dominates spirit even to a slight degree, the sound will ultimately be swallowed up in the silence of inertia. That which is in perfect equilibrium is perpetual. The mind shares in this possibility of perpetuity but it must accomplish absolute poise to transform this potential into a potency.

According to the wisdom of the Egyptians, from which the Greeks derived their concepts of universal order, all beings existing in nature have four attributes: a number, a color, a sound, and a form. All these dimensions originate in the chemistry of light and darkness or the proportions of spirit and matter. We can appreciate this concept when we realize that vibration, which is a motion of life through a medium or within its own composition, naturally produces these manifestations.

"Mundane music," writes Dr. Fludd, "is produced by the essential effects of the planets and elements. If we are to credit Plato and Cardan, it is in those parts that order and proportional arrangement produce the most perfect music.



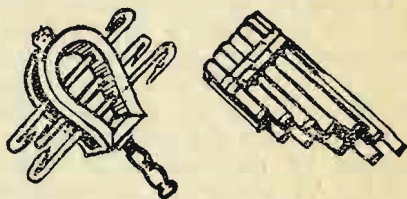
These authorities say that the circumgyrations and groupings of the spheres cause the highest harmony. But on account of the great distance this harmony is not audible to us." By this analogy we can understand that the sidereal and elementary bodies may be compared to the arrangement of instruments in a symphony orchestra. The motions of the heavens and the movements everywhere present among the elements bring these groups of instruments into different patterns. Conductors of orchestras group their instruments in various arrangements according to taste or the requirements of the compositions which they are playing. Leopold Stokowski is an outstanding exponent of this procedure as a means of coloring and emphasizing tonal patterns.

The Pythagoreans regarded the art of music as a general introduction to the study of universal dynamics. They explored to considerable depths the melodic, rhythmic, and metric potentials of this art. They believed that the human being produced music in the same way that God produced the world. To them sound was much more than a pleasant kind of noise. They considered both its cause and its consequences, and were convinced that these consequences influenced every department of human living. They went even further, and theoretically at least acknowledged that even rocks and trees could be affected by the products of human musical composition.

Tones or combinations of tones could stimulate the growth of plants, moderate the passions of men, stimulate all types of emotions and thoughts, react upon inert substances, and invoke the most exalted feelings and aspirations. Conversely, music could be used to destroy; any material form could be shattered, and the most depraved impulses could be stimulated. Even architecture was music in stone, and a properly proportioned building could be 'played' as though it were a piece of music.

The inner life of man can be nourished through the sensory perceptions, even as the body is fed through the mouth. The Greeks experimented considerably with various forms of sensory therapy. They

found that inharmonies and intemperances of the body could be corrected by exposing to the gaze of the sufferer harmoniously-composed geometrical designs and solid figures. Skillfully-blended colors could be as powerful as drugs. Pythagoras believed in the therapeutic power of poetry and treated disease by reading sections of Homer. Here a skillful well-modulated voice, the beauty of the words, and the metric compositions of the verses, all combined to restore the internal balance of the patient. A careful mingling of various perfumes, each determined by its affinity to one of the planets, and the compound inhaled could correct intemperances of the mind or emotions. The several consistencies of physical substance as rough or fine cloth, polished stones and gems, and the textures of food were important when the sense of touch conveyed impressions of these surfaces to the inner structure of the brain.



The Greeks likewise placed great emphasis upon the types of instruments used to produce music. They regarded the human voice as the most perfect of all musical instruments. They did not believe that the sounds originated in the vocal machinery, but were communicated to the throat by the energies of the soul. Thus the light and darkness in the soul determined the quality of the voice. Greek singers, whether performing alone or in groups, each sang according to the comfort of his own voice, and usually tuned his instrument by this authority alone. In a way, therefore, the instrument was intimately associated with himself and was not subjected to any general conformity with the instruments of others.

Natural talent, taste, and inclination revealed the musician. He expressed himself rather than a tradition. He un-



folded his own individual conception and his musical productions changed and grew with the unfolding of his own consciousness. Co-operation was voluntary and was not required. The chorus, each member of which was conscious only of the melodic line, might by the natural differences in voices attain an accidental harmony. Such harmony revealed an internal concord, rather than an intellectual or mathematical concept of tone blending. The words of the song might be a hymn of praise to one of the gods, but the ideal was for each singer to experience the attributes of this god within himself and permit this holy and beautiful emotion to express itself spontaneously through his voice.

Pythagoras preferred stringed instruments as being most closely in harmony with the pure vibration of the universe. He advised all his disciples to refrain from wind instruments and those which produced sound through percussion. His favorite was the lute, the very strings of which represented the planets and constellations. The pipes were more rustic, being peculiar to the god Pan; their spritely tones inclined toward frivolous and superficial matters. Percussion, which depended largely upon rhythm for its significance, lacked philosophical content. It inclined to stimulate by broken forms rather than by the graceful flow of melody.

The Greek purists in music would be inclined to regard the modern musical forms as a proof of a drift of human consciousness toward materialism. More and more the free expression of creative urge has been imprisoned in arbitrary formulas. The effort seems to be to establish an acceptable standard and to measure ability by reference to this more or less arbitrary yardstick. This is equally true in most of the other arts and throughout religion, philosophy, and education. Everywhere conformity brings approval, and nonconformity criticism and condemnation. Individuals must be regimented to maintain levels of intelligence and efficiency because they are submerged in the dogmas and codes of collectives.

Truly great musicians have for the most part created forms suitable for the expression of their genius. As in the case of Richard Wagner, they have been subjected to numerous attacks and bitter oppositions because of their innovations. In his opera *The Meistersinger of Nuremberg*, Wagner tells the story of his own fate at the hands of the *Merkers* of his day.

While certain arbitrary patterns of artistic procedure may have a tendency to elevate those less talented to a level of acceptable performance, these same patterns impose unreasonable limitations upon those whose natural gifts fit them for superiority. The same is equally true in any department of learning which binds the natural capacities of the intellect to traditional forms and traditional methods.

The purpose of the arts is to express, and the integrity of primitive art is due largely to the simplicity and directness of method. It is a fallacy for the sophisticated modern artist to attempt to copy the primitive forms. His reproductions lack the honesty of the original because he has assumed a style inconsistent with the condition of his consciousness. The history of civilization is faithfully preserved in the pageantry of its art expressions. To bind these expressions into schools and impose them upon the future is to retard the growth of man himself.

The present state of musical appreciation reveals clearly the levels of our social systems. Music can be a defense against the inroads of external uncertainties. It can also be an escape from the pressures of political, economical, and cultural chaos. The ability to appreciate great music results from a refinement of the inner life. We respond to that which is like ourselves, and the nervous tension which agitates our personalities inclines many of us to seek the stimulation





of what we please to call popular music. The meaningless words, the frantic rhythms, the purposeless discords, and the speedy tempos whip tired nerves into a false semblance of animation.

Superficial music, appealing only to the surfaces of the human personality, bears witness to the lack of depth and penetration everywhere evident in our way of life. We have forgotten completely that great music must originate in a great concept of life. In early times religion was the supreme motivation, the highest force at work in man's world. The noblest musical compositions were, therefore, inspired by sacred themes and the contemplation upon the natures, powers, and attributes of the gods. The same was true of sculpturing, poetry, the dance, and architecture. It is only within the past three hundred years in Europe and America that the body of the arts has shifted to a secular foundation. There is very little indication that this shift has advanced the dignity of man or his works. Secular motives are usually trivial when compared to religious or philosophical motives. Arts have advanced technically, and declined in cultural significance.

The modern world is groping toward what we may call a contemporary art consciousness. All branches of aesthetics are obviously in a transition period. We have been held so long in traditional forms that it is difficult to be truly creative in an environment which penalizes individuality. Shostakovich, Gertrude Stein, Picasso, Mary Wiggam and Frank Lloyd Wright are typical examples of a broad motion away from the arbitrary restrictions imposed by the past upon the natural growth of the arts. We may hold certain mental reservations about the products of this emancipation but we cannot deny that the quest for freedom is reasonable and inevitable. More is necessary, however, than a desperate resolution to escape from the old; there must be some adequate concept of the ends which we seek to attain.

We may appreciate the sincerity behind the present fumbling but we cannot honestly become rhapsodical over the results obtained to date. Merely to be dif-

ferent is not enough. There is no use imposing the tyranny of the new upon the tyranny of the old. A change must be accompanied by growth, and growth itself is a purposed motion. Only that which is essentially nobler than the past can outgrow the limitations of the older concepts.

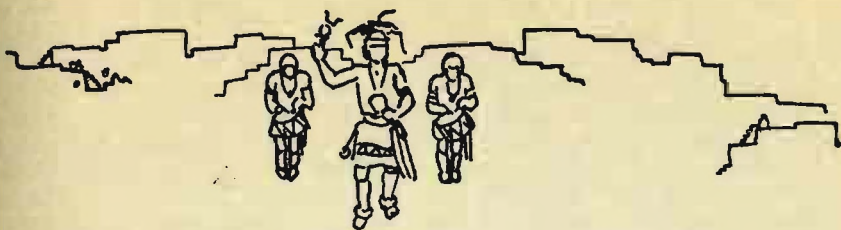
According to the Chinese, three kinds of men write poetry. The first is inspired to strive after an enduring fame. The second scribbles verses as a means of livelihood. The third, indifferent to distinction or fortune, is compelled from within himself to express the beauty and nobility of his own consciousness. Only such a one is a poet. The others are false to themselves and to their art.

It is equally true in the world of music that without some high motive the product is mediocre. No matter how we look at it, royalties are not legitimate motives. With hope of gain lurking in the back of the mind, a workman-like and technically-satisfactory product can be produced but the claim to true genius will be feeble. If commercialized and industrialized art are objectionable to the honest aesthetician, art wedded to politics is still more exasperating. After condemning the ancients for using artistic media to advance their religious and moral convictions, the moderns dedicate their own productions to themes of social significance and plague the world with rhymed, syncopated, symphonized, metered, unmetered, dramatized, postured, and choregraphic versions of Karl Marx.

It should not be supposed that all music must be reserved for solemn religious pageantry. It flows naturally out of the human heart under a wide variety of moods and circumstances. Primitive peoples have songs for all occasions. The Indian tribes of North America preserve most of the historical records and cultural concepts of their nations in their chants and melodies. There were songs of council and of hunting; songs to welcome strangers, and to strengthen the heart in time of trouble; fertility songs, healing chants, and music to gladden the souls of departed spirits.

While to our ears most of these melodies are crude and confused, they were





sincere, honest, and devout. Their very integrity enriched the social life of the tribe by restating the cultural heritage and binding the people together with strong emotional ties.

The rain dances, still performed in the pueblos of the Southwest, are a source of constant perplexity to the Anglos. Only last year central New Mexico suffered a serious water shortage. So serious was the situation that plans were made for special services of prayer in the local cathedral. Old settlers waited hopefully for the rain dances in the Indian villages. Within twenty-four hours after the first dance, rain fell in torrents as it has done as far back as memory and tradition have record. The songs, the drums, and the dance have never failed.

The recent experiments have proved that music can do much to soothe tired nerves, harassed minds, and weary bodies. Many factories, stores, and institutions have installed elaborate equipment to bring planned music programs to customers, workers, and inmates. In almost every case these installations have proved markedly beneficial. Experimentation has shown that best results are obtained with what we call semiclassical compositions, especially such as have simple, familiar, melodic lines. Syncopation of all kinds tends to irritate or stimulate, and heavy classical selections require too much conscious attention. Vocal music must be listened to, rather than heard, and this interferes with various activities. Usually the music should not be loud, but should hover in the air without intruding upon the conscious processes of the mind. By increasing the tempo gradually through the working day, the natural slow-down of the late afternoon is markedly reduced.

Experiments are being made with music therapy in connection with battle

fatigue and a number of mental diseases which have resulted from the second-world war. Although the program so far is largely experimental, there are indications that such methods of treatment are beneficial. The Greeks taught that music is indeed a medicine for the soul.

With the development of radio and the phonograph, music is now available in most American homes. Reasonable discrimination in the selection of programs will quickly show that good music can usually be had for the turning of the dial. In Los Angeles, for example, classical or semiclassical music flows through the ether waves from eight to ten hours each day. Phonograph records of nearly all the world's best music are obtainable and may be collected to form valuable libraries for the layman and musicologist alike. Only appreciation is necessary to this cultural enrichment.

But there are no blessings that do not bring with them some less desirable consequences. We are gradually becoming a nation of listeners, and have lost the communion of personal participation. Fifty years ago the musical life of the private family centered around the upright piano in the corner of the room. Here friends and neighbors gathered to mingle their talents in a common nostalgia. None played well, but most could pick out old familiar melodies, doleful hymns, and popular tunes. All came with generous spirits, resolved to enjoy rather than to criticise. The results, good, bad, or indifferent, were expressions of natural tastes and inclinations. All took part and experienced a communion of united effort. It is just as important, in fact more important, to release music from within the self than merely to listen. We need the growth resulting

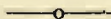


from personal performance as well as the civilizing force of appreciation.

Several young persons have told me that they wanted to study music, but had directed their attentions to more practical concerns, because music had no future unless the student had exceptional capacities. We must remember that the boy or girl has his own future to consider, and that which enriches his life is important whether or not it fattens his purse. We might live in a more gracious world if our children were educated in music, not as a means of livelihood but as a means of enriching our lives.

To the old philosopher, the human body itself was a musical instrument. It is the musician within the body who must control and direct the impulses which flow outward through the personality. We talk much of the science of living but we should think more about the art of living. It is not the destiny of man that he should compete with machines in the hope of equaling them in mechanized efficiency. He is capable of a larger concept and a higher destiny and he is responsible before God and nature for the right use of the capacities and powers peculiarly his own. The laws operating in the universe are striving eternally for the victory of soul power over physical force.

In those periods of the world which Plato described as spiritually fertile, the arts flourished and men were dedicated to the service of beauty. When the human mind departs from ideals and assumes the sovereign importance of physical things there is an immediate decay, internal and external. The loss of internal security results in external chaos. We resign ourselves to the burdens of a purposeless existence to the degree that purposed vision dims in our minds and hearts. We cannot expect too much in the form of permanent remedy from such institutions as the League of Nations or the United Nations Organization. These groups set up in the outer world cannot correct the defects which originate within man and not around him in physical society. The universe itself is the Great League, revealing through its structure the perfect pattern of world government. The concord of the spheres sustains the outer framework of cosmos. The 'music of the spheres' symbolizes the mundane concord. The music in the soul of man, originating in the sidereal harmonies, must likewise sustain the concord of his material institutions. Before we can attain to that golden time we look for, more than one man, the old Greek of Samos, must hear the 'music of the spheres.'



### ARCHITECTURAL NOTE

The ancient Nordic people developed a specific concept of the size, proportions, and style of the temple of the gods, known as Valhalla. This great banquet hall is described as having 540 doors, and each door was exactly wide enough to permit 800 warriors to pass through abreast. The two giants who built Valhalla in a single night certainly deserved the treasure of the Nibelung, plus 'E' for enterprise.



### BLESSED IS FRIDAY

According to the Moslem world Friday is a holy day, for upon this day Adam was taken into paradise, and it was upon a Friday that he was cast out. It is the day upon which Adam repented and on which he died. It will also be the day of resurrection; therefore it should be held apart for public and private service.



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## Worthy of Special Notice

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Three advanced nations of civilized Indians flourished in Central and South America prior to the arrival of the Spaniards. The plateau of central Mexico sustained the Aztec Empire. To the south, extending from the Mexican state of Chiapas to Honduras, was the vast domain of the Mayas. Still further south, in Peru, flourished the socialized commonwealth of the Incas.

The most highly advanced of these groups was that of the Mayas, and they were the only peoples of the Western Hemisphere to develop a written language. Only three of their manuscripts have survived, and these strange accordion-like books are among the world's greatest literary treasures. The Incas to the south had no written language so far as we know, but the Aztec Empire of Mexico came under the influence of the Mayan culture, and was verging toward a written form when its culture was annihilated by the Spanish fortune-hunters.

The Aztec books, so-called, are really picture manuscripts representing persons, places, and events by hieroglyphical devices. In some instances, the hieroglyphics had phonetic value and were combined to form words and names. Because picture writing reproduces in graphic form whatever subject it intends to portray, the interpretation of such symbolic writing is not too difficult for those acquainted with the customs and manners of the people.

Throughout the Mexican area the Spanish priests labored to destroy the

records of the pagan empires they had conquered. Many priceless manuscripts were consigned to the flames by these pious bigots, and as a result studies relating to conditions in America prior to the advent of the white man have been seriously handicapped.

Although the manuscripts of the Mayas and Aztecs date from the 15th or the 16th century, they are far more scarce than the Egyptians' writings, two or three thousands years older. The discovery of written records in the Mexican and Central American areas has been exceedingly slow. Excavations seldom result in the finding of books—the Spaniards were thorough in their methods of destruction.

Fortunately, the Spanish soldiers were addicted to collecting souvenirs, and in a number of cases they preserved the curious manuscripts of the natives and sent them to friends or relatives in Spain. After the first wave of fanaticism had exhausted itself, the Spaniards suddenly realized the foolishness of their book-burning zeal and attempted the restoration of the literature they had so nearly destroyed. A number of Aztec Indians converted to Christianity were called upon to compile histories of their tribes and states in the ancient method of hieroglyphical pictures.

Today, the manuscripts attributed to the Aztecs in the great museums of Europe and America are frequently on Spanish-made paper or show traces of Spanish influence. The writings are di-





vided into two groups, those probably pre-Hispanic and those certainly post-Hispanic. If they are authentic productions, it makes very little difference in practical terms to which group a given work belongs.

The appearance of an Aztec manuscript on the market today means that some old collection belonging to one of the great families of Spain, Portugal, or Italy, has been broken up due to the extinction of the family itself or its impoverishment. Inedited manuscripts still exist in out-of-the-way places, but the probability of their appearance is becoming constantly more remote. One by one they have found their way into the great national collections.

Several years ago, and under most unusual circumstances, an Aztec picture manuscript was discovered by Manly P. Hall, and is now preserved in the Library of the Philosophical Research Society. Manuscripts of this type are referred to as codices, and this one, which consisted of six leaves folded like a screen and conserving symbols and figures upon both sides, was a most curious piece of primitive work.

Very little is known about these codices in spite of the many brilliant men who have worked in the field. It was, therefore, necessary to bring this manuscript to the attention of experts for their trained and skillful opinions. It was extremely fortunate that it was possible to interest Dr. Sylvanus G. Morley, Associate of the Carnegie Institution of Wash-

ington, and Director of the School of American Research and the Museum of New Mexico.

Dr. Morley is one of the world's leading authorities on the subject of Central American civilization, and after examining the codex, he stated it to be his opinion that the work "dates from the immediate post-Conquest period." Convinced that there was an excellent probability that the codex was genuine, Dr. Morley advised that Dr. Charles E. Dibble, of the Department of Anthropology, University of Utah, be consulted. Dr. Dibble was sufficiently impressed that the codex was a previously-unpublished manuscript dealing with ancient Aztec religious ritual, that he graciously undertook an interpretation of the hieroglyphics, and an analysis of the psychology of the manuscript.

It is customary when a codex appears for an authoritative facsimile to be made, and for this purpose Mr. Louie H. Ewing, of Santa Fe, New Mexico, a nationally-known artist of full-color and silk-screen reproductions, prepared this facsimile which reproduces the entire work in the actual size of the original.

It is customary, also, that codices shall be named for the place in which they were discovered, the place in which they are preserved, or the person by whom they are first made available to the scientific world. Thus, the *Codex Borgia* is named for the great House of Borgia. The *Codex Porfirio Diaz* is named for the late President of Mexico. The *Codex Dresden* is named for the city in which it is now located. At the suggestion of Dr. Morley, the present Aztec work will be preserved permanently in the scientific world as the *Codex Hall*.

The *Codex Hall* has been published as Monogram No. 11 of the Monographs of the Schools of American Research, and was printed by the University of New Mexico Press. In addition to the commentary by Dr. Charles E. Dibble, there is a brief introduction by Dr. Sylvanus G. Morley and a preface by Manly Palmer Hall. The text is illustrated in 17 small reproductions from manuscripts and books containing parallel figures and symbols. The edition is limited to 1500



copies, and the price of the Monograph has been fixed by the School of American Research in consideration of the expense of reproducing the *Codex* in full color.

The University issues the manuscript with the following bibliographical data: *Codex Hall, An Ancient Mexican Hieroglyphic Picture Manuscript Commentary* by Charles E. Dibble of the Department of Anthropology, University of Utah; silk-screen facsimile reproductions of the

*Codex* by Louie H. Ewing, Santa Fe, New Mexico. \$10.00.

All friends of the Philosophical Research Society and those interested in Manly Palmer Hall and his work will be interested in this unusual discovery of a religious, ritualistic manuscript of the Aztec Empire. We have a limited number of copies for friends and students and can supply them while they last at the same price at which they are offered by the School of American Research.



In the year A. D. 636 the Emperor T'ai 'Tsung permitted a Christian church to be built in China. His decree on the subject is worth remembering. The Emperor said: "The truth does not always appear under the same name, nor is divine inspiration always embodied in the same form. Religions vary in various lands but the underlying principle of all is the salvation of mankind."

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There is a legend in Japan that the sand loosened by the feet of pilgrims when they climb the sacred mountain, Fujiyama, flows back up the mountain to its original place every night.

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Hundreds of years ago an ignorant country woman named Mother Shipton composed prophecies in doggerel verse which have been a never-ending cause of amazement. Centuries ago Mother Shipton described tunnels under rivers, carriages moving without horses, ships sailing beneath the surface of the sea, flying machines, and other marvels to come. Mother Shipton predicted the great fire of London, and when the disaster occurred, the citizens of the city made little effort to fight the flames, because they felt that nothing could prevent the fulfillment of Mother Shipton's prediction.

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Cato the Elder was approached with the question, "Most Romans have statues erected in their honor; why have you none?" Cato replied, "I would rather men would ask why I have no statue than why, by the gods, have I a statue?"





## Library Notes: *Music*

A. J. HOWIE

Music has a widespread appeal and we are going to use it as a subject whereby to develop a pattern of *how to be helpful to the library research program*. Friends in all walks of life can participate, wherever they are, and whenever they have time.

The plan is simple. We want to accumulate an index of material on the various subjects emphasized in our library—philosophy, comparative religion, and the esoteric lore of their ancient sources. This is no job for a small boy. In fact the possibilities of such a central index are unlimited.

Just think what it would mean to students of symbolism to have access to references for specific objects—the rose, lily, lotus; various types of crosses and other geometrical figures; fabulous beasts as the dragon, phoenix, unicorn. To students of philosophy who want to check particular philosophical concepts—the atom, monad, truth, beauty, the Absolute. To students of religion—the nature of God, heavenly hierarchies, sin, salvation, miracles. There is an endless list of sects — Gnostics, Parsees, Zen, Druids, Manichees.

Many times when we are looking for information, it is available if only we knew where to look. A multitude of valuable reference books is not indexed. Some books have bibliographical material, but in a general sense rather than for detailed or specific reference. There just is no comprehensive source for index material on occult subjects. Our library can become the archive for organizing

and preserving such research indexing and make it generally available.

This is one of the many ways in which you can further the work of the Philosophical Research Society and at the same time develop your own talents. Much of the scholarship in the metaphysical field is lost because popular demand is such that few publishers are interested. But our library is a means for preserving and perpetuating the talents and efforts of students in our field.

*Music as an esoteric tradition* falls within the scope of our library research. The factors of harmony, form, and schools of technique are the province of musicologists. What we want reference material on is suggested by the questions: Why were philosophers concerned with music? What part did music play in religion through the ages? No orderly development or treatment is intended in the following notes.

*What is Music?* by Isaac L. Rice, published by D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1875. The author has digested herein information all out of proportion to the size of the book. The chapter titles include the theories of the Chinese, Hindu, Egyptian, Grecian, Arabic-Persian, Scholastics, Euler, Herbert Spencer. The author concludes the book with the following thoughts:

"...False rhythm, whether we use the word in the wide or in the narrow sense, is equivalent to want of symmetry in things of Space.

"The principles that are manifested in the forces governing the universe—grav-



ity, centrifugal force, and attraction—are likewise manifested in the internal government of music.

"And, lastly, the spiritual perception of the beautiful in both visible and audible Nature is identical; namely, as states of mind.

"As a final result of my speculations, I hold that music is not accidental and human, but dynamical and cosmical."

*The Decline of the West* by Oswald Spengler, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1934. This is the reprinted one volume edition. The index to each volume contains a wealth of reference material that will provoke unlimited research on music in relation to civilizations and cultures. There is much quotable material which, however, should not be taken out of context. Spengler was keenly aware of the close affinity between music and contemporary mathematics, concepts of religion, etc. He calls the organ a "*space-commanding* giant." And he describes the

organ-playing of Bach as an "analysis of a strange and vast tone-world." Suggestive of the vast concepts of Spengler is the idea that "the strict canon . . . finally, in the lonely, utterly infinitesimal tone-world of the 'Tristan' music, frees itself from all earthly comprehensibleness." We cannot do justice to this great modern book by quoting, but from the standpoint of our subject, it is important to a lofty perspective on many phases of metaphysical research.

From a purely philosophic and esoteric basis, Plutarch's *Essays* contain many opinions on music among the Greeks.

"Music," says Plato, "the creator of harmony and order, was not given by heaven to man for the purpose of amusement and tickling the ears, but to disentangle gently, bring round, and restore again to its proper place the turbulence of the soul that has gone astray in the body as regards its revolutions and connections, and has often committed ex-

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cesses through a deficiency in education and gracefulness, by intemperance and neglect of duty."

"The ancient Greeks, with more reason than others, were so careful to teach their children music. For they deemed it requisite by the assistance of music to form and compose the minds of youth to what was decent, sober, and virtuous; believing the use of music beneficially efficacious to incite to all serious actions, especially to the adventuring upon warlike dangers. To which purpose they made use of pipes or flutes when they advanced in battle array against their enemies.

"But among the more ancient Greeks, music in theatres was never known, for they employed their whole musical skill in the worship of the gods, and the education of youth; at which time, there being no theatres erected, music was yet confined within the walls of their tem-

ples, as being that with which they worshipped the supreme deity and sang the praises of virtuous men."

"Now that those cities which were governed by the best laws took care always of a generous education in music, many testimonies may be produced. But for us it shall suffice to have instanced Terpander, who appeased a sedition among the Lacedaemonians, and Thaletas the Cretan, of whom Pratinas writes that, being sent for by the Lacedaemonians by advice of the oracle, he freed the city from a raging pestilence. Homer tells that the Grecians stopped the fury of another noisome pestilence by the power and charms of the same noble science."

"For indeed the chiefest and sublimest end of music is the graceful return of our thanks to the gods, and the next is to purify and bring our minds to a sober and harmonious temper."



Among his *Symposiasts* the following questions are pertinent to our subject: Question V. That we ought carefully to preserve ourselves from pleasures arising from bad music. And how it may be done. Question VIII. What sort of music is fittest for an entertainment?

*Asiatic Researches*; or, Transactions of the Society Instituted in Bengal, for inquiring into the history and antiquities, the arts, sciences, and literature, of Asia. Printed verbatim from the Calcutta edition. London, 1801.

Vol. 3, p. 55. *Musical Modes of the Hindus*: Written in 1784, and since much enlarged. By the President (Sir William Jones).

"Thus it is the province of the *philosopher* to . . . account, as well as he can, for the affections, which music produces; and, generally, to investigate the causes of the many wonderful appearances, which it exhibits . . ."

"Not only has music merit and charms, but may . . . be applied on a variety of occasions to salutary purposes; whether, indeed, the sensations of hearing be caused, as many suspect, by the vibrations of an elastic ether flowing over the auditory nerves and propelled along their solid capillaments, or whether the fibres of our nerves, which seem indefinitely divisible, have, like the strings of a lute, peculiar vibrations proportioned to their length and degree of tension, we have not sufficient evidence to decide; but we are very sure that the whole nervous system is affected in a singular manner by combinations of sound, and that melody alone will often relieve the mind, when it is oppressed by intense application to business or study . . . That any medical purpose may be fully answered by music, I dare not assert; but after food, when the operations of digestion and absorption give so much employment to the vessels, that a temporary state of mental repose must be found, especially in hot climates, essential to health, it seems reasonable to believe, that a few agreeable airs, either heard or played without effort, must have all the good effects of sleep and none of its disadvantages . . ."

" . . . two wild antelopes used often to come from their woods to a place where music was played, with the appearance of listening with pleasure; venomous and malignant snakes leave their holes upon hearing tunes on a flute, the music seeming to give them delight; a celebrated Persian lutist Mirza Mohammed, surnamed Bulbul, was playing to a large company in a grove near Shiraz where the nightingales seemed to vie with the musician, sometimes warbling on the trees, sometimes fluttering from branch to branch, as if they wished to approach the instrument, whence the melody proceeded, and at length dropping on the ground in a kind of ecstasy, from which they were soon raised by a change of mode."

In this article is a reference to a work that we do not have, but Sir William's comment is suggestive that it may be an important reference: "The most valuable work that I have seen, and perhaps the most valuable that exists, on the subject of Indian music, is named *Ragavibodha*, or The Doctrine of Musical Modes; by Soma."

In contrast to the highly developed musical philosophy of the Hindus, we turn to the simple primitive thoughts of the American Indians. Frances Densmore has carried on extensive research among the North American tribes under the sponsorship of the Smithsonian Institution, the details of which are preserved in the Smithsonian Reports.

*Teton Sioux Music*. Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 61, 1918.

p. 6. "...but all the old music is associated with things that lie very close to the heart of the Indian."

p. 8. "The words of certain songs are in a 'sacred (esoteric) language,' which disguises their meanings."

p. 59. "...it is observed that the oldest songs, which are considered the best songs, were 'composed in dreams.' This means that they came in a supposedly supernatural manner to the mind of a man who was hoping for such experiences and who had established the mental and physical condition under which they were believed to occur. In this we



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have the native concept of what we call 'inspiration.' The Indian isolated himself by going away from the camp, while the white musician or poet locks his door, but both realize the necessity of freedom from distraction."

p. 88. "In regard to the songs, Dreamer-of-the-Sun told me that I may pray with my mouth and the prayer will be heard, but if I *sing* the prayer will be heard *sooner* by Wakan'tanka."

p. 92. "When we heard that you had come for the facts concerning the Sun dance we consulted together in our homes. Some hesitated. We have discarded the old ways, yet to talk of them is 'sacred talk' to us. If we were to talk of the Sun dance there should be at least 12 persons present, so that no disrespect would be shown, and no young people should be allowed to come from curiosity."

*Chippewa Music*. Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 45, 1910.

p. 18. "....the rhythm....is most peculiar in songs which are intended to produce magic and mysterious results. In this class are included songs for the healing of the sick as well as songs used in connection with special 'medicine' for success in hunting or other undertakings. In many of these songs there is no repetition of a rhythmic unit, but the entire song constitutes a rhythmic unit, its repeated renditions forming a satisfactory whole."

p. 20. "No effort has been made by the writer to secure the 'bad medicine songs' or songs of cursing. One who has heard a large number of these songs states that they are terrible in their maledictions and represent a phase of life and thought which it were better to leave



untouched. They are the weapons of defense in the Mide', and all that is believed to have been wrought through them will ever be an unwritten page."

p. 20. "....If a cure of the sick is desired he frequently mixes and sells a medicine after singing the song which will make it effectual.... In the working of a charm it is considered necessary to use both the proper song and the proper medicine."

These are very meager notes in comparison to the material to be drawn upon. We have not mentioned the section in Stanley's *History of Philosophy* on the music of the Pythagoreans, nor the many diagrams in the works of Robert Fludd illustrating the cosmical significance of tonal relationships, nor modern works on musical therapy, and we can only suggest that there are countless other aspects of

musical philosophy that would be of interest to the subject.

We have quoted rather more freely than would be done in a formal index in order to illustrate how to choose pertinent material. In an index of the sort we propose, it is important to note the full name of the book and author, an identification of the edition, and the page number, with a brief description of the reference rather than the full quotation as we have done. The reason is that context is always important and subsequent researchers should always consult the original source if possible.

Anyone who is able and willing to help in this interesting work may write for suggested topics. The commitment of yourself to responsibility for the index of some subject will give greater purpose to your reading so that you also will be helped.



## PLATO ON ATHEISM

On one occasion the great Athenian observed, "No one who has taken up the opinion in youth that the gods do not exist ever continued in the same until he was old."

A certain Roman discovered a large sum of money buried in the foundations of his grandfather's house. Being honest, and in doubt as to ownership, this good citizen wrote to the emperor explaining that he had found the treasure. The emperor's reply was very brief; "Use it." Still bewildered, the citizen wrote back that the sum was greater than his estate or condition could use. The emperor sent another note equally brief; "Abuse it."

*From the apothegms of Francis Bacon*

## DIVINE DISCOVERY

Moses found a god of ethics, Zoroaster a god of social progress, Buddha a god of infinite compassion, Jesus a god of friendship, and Mohammed a god of world democracy.

## THE WISDOM OF THE EAST DEPARTMENT

One of the Indian sages said, "I wept when I was born and I have been finding out why ever since."



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